

A  
SAINT INDEED;  
*John Jebb*  
OR THE  
GREAT WORK  
OF A  
CHRISTIAN  
OPENED AND PRESSED.

BEING,

A SEASONABLE AND PROPER  
EXPEDIENT FOR THE RECO-  
VERY OF THE MUCH DECAY-  
ED POWER OF GODLINESS A-  
MONG THE PROFESSORS OF  
THESE TIMES.

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BY JOHN FLAVELL,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

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# T H E

## EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To my dearly beloved and longed for, the Flock of Jesus Christ in Dartmouth, over whom the Holy Ghost hath made me an overseer, sound judgment, true zeal, and unstained purity, is heartily wished.

*My dear Friends,*

**T**H E R E are three sad sights with which our eyes should continually affect our hearts: 'The first is, to behold, in every place, so many prophane and dissolute ones, who bear the very image of Satan; the face of whose conversation plainly discovers what they are, and whither they are going, Phil. iii. 18, 19. These look like themselves, the children of wrath. The second is, to see so many cursed hypocrites, artificially disguising themselves, and with marvellous dexterity, acting the parts of saints; so that even a judicious eye may sometimes mistake the similar workings of the Spirit

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on them, for his saving working on others. To hear such a person conferring, praying, bewailing his corruptions, and talking of his experiences ; would easily persuade a man to believe, that he hath the heart as well as the face of a sincere Christian ; for

(*Sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat.*) so the people of God do speak, so they pray, and even so they open their conditions. These look like saints, but are none. The third is to see them, who have been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, so to fall into such scandalous practices, as to crucify to themselves the son of God a fresh, and put him to an open shame ; Heb. vi 4, 5, 6.

These are three sad sights indeed : and oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep abundantly over them all !

For the first I would mourn heartily, considering that they, so continuing,

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sinning, must be damned eternally,  
2 Thess. i. 8, 9. 1 Cor. vi. 9.

For the second, I would both weep and tremble, considering that they, so abiding, must be damned doubly, Mat. xxiv. 51.

And for the third, no less than any of the rest, because it is impossible for such to renew them again unto repentance, Heb, vi, 6, but by returning again like Peter to that Jesus whom they have denied, and because the heavy woe denounced against those who give offences lies upon them, Mat. 18, 7.

Alas ! that ever they should shed the blood of others souls, for whom Christ shed his own blood ! that ever they should be cruel to others, who have found Christ so kind to them ! I know they dare not do it directly and intentionally, but so it proves occasionally and eventually. Suffer me here to digress a little, and expostulate with these prejudiced and hardened souls : I will presently return to you again. O ! why do you mischief your own souls by other mens examples ? because they stumble and break their shins, will  
A 3 , you

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you fall and break your necks? I desire all such as harden themselves by these things, and take up a good opinion of their own deplorable condition, would soberly consider and answer these three queries.

*Q. 1. Doth religion any way countenance or patronize the sinful practices of its professors, or doth it not rather impartially and severely condemn them?* It is the glory of the Christian religion, that it is pure and undefiled, Jam. i. 27. no doctrine so holy, Psal. xix. 8. nor doth any make more provision for an holy life, Titus ii. 11, 12. Indeed there is a case wherein we may charge the evil practices of men upon their principles, but that is when their practices naturally flow from, and necessarily follow their principles: as for example, if I see a Papist sin boldly, I may charge it upon his principles, for they set pardons to sale, and so make way for looseness. If I see any man slight the grace of God, and proudly advance himself, I may cry shame upon his principles, which directly lead to it: but can I do so where such practices are condemned

demned and provided against, by their own avowed principles which commit them?

Q. 2. *Is it not a most irrational thing, to let fly at religion, because of the scandalous ways of some, whilst in the mean time, you wholly slight and overlook the holy and heavenly conversations of many others?—Are all that profess godliness loose and careless in their lives?* No; some are an ornament to their profession, and the glory of Christ; and why must the innocent be condemned with the guilty? Why the eleven for one Judas?

Q. 3. *If you condemn religion because of the scandalous lives of some that profess it, must you not then cast off all religion in the world and turn downright Atheists?* Surely this is the consequence of it; for what religion is there, but some that profess it walk contrary to that their profession: and then, as Constantine told the Novitian, you must set up your ladder, and go to heaven by yourself.

But alas! it is not our printed apologies for religion, but the visi-

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ble reformati<sup>o</sup>ns of its professors, that must both save its honour, and remove those fatal stumbling-blocks, at which the blind world strikes and falls into eternal perdition.

Now, there are two ways by which this may be effected. First, by convincing the consciences of professors of their miscarriages, and the evil and aggravations of them. Secondly by medicating the heart, and cleansing the fountain whence they proceed. In the first of these, a worthy and eminent servant of **Christ** hath lately laboured, holding a clear Gospel-glass before the faces of professors, which truly represent their spots and blemishes ; (See *Gospel-glass*.) If he that reads it, will consider, apply, and practise, it shall doubtless turn to his salvation ; but, if it turns to no good account to him that reads it, I know it shall turn to a testimony for him that wrote it. The second is a principal design of this small Treatise ; the subject whereof is exceeding weighty, and of daily use to the people of God, though the manner of handling it be attended with many defects and weaknesses :

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weaknesses : Every one cannot be excellent who yet may be useful.

I will exercise your patience no longer than whilst I tell you.

1. Why I published it to the view of the world.

2. Why I direct it particularly to you.

First for the publication of it, take this sincere and brief account, that as I was led to this subject by a special providence, so to the publication of it by a kind of necessity. The providence at first leading me to it was this : A dear and choice friend of my intimate acquaintance, being under much inward trouble upon the account of some special heart disorder, opened the case to me, and earnestly requested some rules and helps in that particular. Whilst I was bending my thoughts to that special case, divers other cases of like importance, some of which were dependent upon that consideration, occurred to my thoughts ; and this scripture which I have insisted upon, presented itself, as a fit foundation for the whole discourse ; which, being lengthened out to what

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you see, divers friends requested me to transcribe for their use, divers of the cases here handled. And some others begged me to publish the whole; to which I was in a manner necessitated, to save the pains of transcribing, which to me is a very tedious and tiresome work. And just as I had almost finished the copy, an opportunity presented, and that somewhat strangely, to make it public. So that from first to last I have been carried beyond my first intentions in this thing.

Obj. If any say, the world is even cloyed with books, and therefore, tho' the discourse be necessary, yet the publication is needless.

Sol. 1. I answer, there are multitudes of books, indeed, and of them, many concern not themselves about root truths, and practical godliness, but spend their strength upon impracticable notions, and frivolous controversies: Many also strike at root truths, and endeavour to undermine the power of godliness; and some there are that nourish the root, and tend to clear and confirm, to prepare and apply the great truths  
of



of the gospel, that they may be bread for souls to live and feed on. Now, though I could wish that those that have handled the pen of the scribe, had better employed their time and pains than to obtrude such useless discourses upon the world, yet, for books of the latter rank, I say, that when husbandmen complain of too much corn, let Christians complain of too many such books.

2. And if you be so highly conceited of your own furniture and ability, that such books are needless to you ; if you let them alone, they will do you no hurt, and other poor hungry souls will be glad of them, and bless God for what you despise and leave.

Obj. If it be said, that several of the cases here handled touch not your condition, I answer,

Sol. 1. That which is not your condition may be another's condition. If you be placed in an easy, full, and prosperous state, and so have no need of the helps here offered, to support your heart under pinching wants, others are forced to live by faith for every day's provision.

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If you be dandled upon the knee of providence, some of your brethren are under its feet. If you have inward peace and tranquillity of spirit, and so need not the counsels here given, to ward off these desperate conclusions, that poor afflicted souls are ready to draw upon themselves at such a time, yet it may be a word in season to them, and they may say as David to Abigail, Blessed be thou of the Lord, and blessed be thy advice.

2. That may be your condition shortly, which is not your condition at present. Say not thy mountain stands strong, thou shalt never be moved: there are changes in the right hand of the most High; and then those truths which are little more esteemed than hedge-fruits, will be as apples of gold in pictures of silver. In Jer. x. 11. the prophet there teaches the Jews, who then dwelt in their own houses, how to defend their religion in Babylon, and what they should say to the Chaldeans there, therefore that verse is written in Chaldee.—So much for the reasons of its publication; Next  
for

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for the dedication of it to you, I was induced thereto, *First*, by the consideration of the relation I have to you above all people in the world : I look on my gifts as yours, my time as yours, and all the talents I am entrusted with as yours. It is not with you as with a woman whose husband is dead, and so is freed from the law of her husband, the relation still continues, and so do all the mutual duties of it. *Secondly*, By the consideration of my necessitated absence from you : I would not that personal absence should, by insensible degrees, untwist, as usually it doth, the cord of friendship ; and therefore have endeavoured, as absent friends use to do, to preserve and strengthen it by this small remembrance. It was Vespasian's answer to Appollonius, when he desired access for two philosophers : My doors, said Vespasian, are always open to philosophers : But my very breast is open to thee. I cannot say with him, my doors are open for the free access of friends, being by a sad providence shut against myself ; but this I can say, my

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my very breast is open to you ; you are as dear to me as ever. *Thirdly*, Another inducement, and indeed the main, was the perpetual usefulness and necessity of these truths for you, which you will have continual need of : and I know few of you have such happy memories to retain, and I cannot be always with you to inculcate these things ; put *litera scripta manet* ; I was willing to leave this with you as a legacy, as a testimony of sincere love for, and care over you. This may counsel and direct you when I cannot ; I may be rendered useless to you by a civil or natural death, but this will outlive me : and, O ! that it may serve your souls when I am silent in the dust !

To hasten now to a conclusion, I have only these three requests to you, which I earnestly beseech you not to deny me ; yea I charge you, as ever you hope to appear with comfort before the great Shepherd, do not dare to slight these requests : *First*, Above all other studies in the world, study your own hearts : Waste not a minute more of your precious

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precious time about frivolous and senseless controversies. It is reported even of Bellarmine, how truly I examine not, *quod a studiis scholasticæ theologiæ avertoretur fere nauseabundus, quoniam succo carebat liquidæ pietatis.* (*Fuligat in vit. Bellar.*)

“He turned with loathing from the study of school divinity, because it wanted the sweet juice of piety.” I had rather it should be said of you, as one said of Swinckfeldius, *Caput regulatum illi defuit, cor bonum non defuit*, “He wanted a regular head, but not an honest heart,” than that you should have regular heads and irregular hearts. My dear flock, I have, according to the grace given me, laboured in the course of my ministry among you, to feed you with the heart-strengthening bread of practical doctrine; and I assure you, it is far better you should have the sweet and saving impressions of gospel truths, feelingly and powerfully conveyed to your hearts, than only to understand them by a bare ratiocination or a dry syllogistical inference. Leave trifling studies to such as have time

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time on their hands, and know not how to employ it. Remember you are at the door of eternity, and have other work to do : those hours you spend upon heart work in your closets, are the golden spots of all your time, and will have the sweetest influence into your last hour. Never forget those sermons I preached to you upon that subject, from 2 Kings xx. 2, 3. Heart work is weighty and difficult work ; an error there may cost you your sou's : I may say of it, as Augustine speaks of the doctrine of the Trinity, *nihilò facilius aut periculosius erratur* ; a man can err in nothing more easily or more dangerously : O ! then study your hearts ! 2dly, My next request is that you will carefully look to your conversations and be accurate in all your ways : hold forth the word of life. Be sure, by the strictness and holiness of your lives, to settle yourselves in the very consciences of your enemies. Remember that your lives must be produced in the great day, to judge the world, 1 Cor. vi. 2. Oh then, what manner of persons ought you  
to

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to be ! You have many eyes over you, the omniscient eye of God, that searches the heart and reins, Rev. ii. 23. the vigilant eye of Satan, Job i. 7, 8. the envious eyes of enemies, that curiously observe you, Psal. v. 8. the quick and observant eye of conscience, which none of your actions escape, Rom. ii. 1.

Oh, then, be precise and accurate in all manner of conversation. Keep up the power of godliness in your closets and families, and then you will not let it fall in your more public employments, and converses in the world. I have often told you, that it is the honour of the gospel, that it makes the best parents and children, the best masters and servants, the best husbands and wives in the world.

My third and last request is, that you pray for me : I hope I can say, and am sure, some of you have acknowledged, that I came at first among you, as the return and answer of your prayers : And indeed so it should be, see Luke x. 2. I am persuaded also, I have been carried on

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on in my work by your prayers, it is sweet when it is so, see Eph. vi. 18. 19. and I hope by your prayers to receive yet a further benefit, even that which is mentioned, Heb. xiii. 18. 19. Philem. 22. And truly it is but equal you should pray for me, I have often prayed for you: let the pulpit, family, and closet witness for me; and God forbid I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.

Yea, friends, your own interest may persuade to it: what mercies you obtain for me, rebound to your own advantage; if God preserve me it is for your use and service: The more gifts and graces a minister hath, the better for them that shall wait on his ministry: The more God gives in to me, the more I shall be able to give out to you.

I will detain you no longer, but to entreat you to accept this small testimony of my great love, and have recourse to it according as the exigencies of your condition shall require. Read it consideringly and obediently: Judge it not by dress and stile, but by the weight and favour



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favour of what you read. It is a good rule of Bernard, in *legendis libris, non quæramus scientiam sed saporem*; "In reading books, regard not so much the science as the favour." That it may prove the favour of life unto life to you, and all those into whose hands it shall come, is the hearty desire of

*Your loving and*

*faithful Pastor,*

JOHN FLAVELL.

From my Study at  
Lev, in Slapton,  
Oâ. 7. 1667. }

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PROV. iv. 23.

KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL  
DILIGENCE, FOR OUT OF IT  
ARE THE ISSUES OF LIFE.

**T**HE Heart of man is his worst part before it be regenerate, and the best afterwards: It is the seat of principles, and fountain of actions. The eye of God is, and the eye of the Christian ought to be principally fixed upon it.

The greatest difficulty in conversion is to win the heart to God, and the greatest difficulty after conversion is to keep the heart with God. Here lies the very pinch and stress of religion; here's that makes the way to life a narrow way, and the gate of heaven a strait gate. Direction and help in this great work, is the scope and sum of this text, wherein we have.

1. An exhortation, "Keep thy heart with all diligence."

2. The reason or motive inforcing it, "For out of it are the issues of life."

In the exhortation I shall consider,

1. The

1. The matter of the duty.

2. The manner of performing it.

1. The matter of the duty ; "Keep thy heart." Heart is not here taken properly for that noble part of the body, which philosophers call the *primum vivens et ultimum moriens* the first that lives, and the last that dies : but, by heart in a metaphor, the scripture sometimes understands some particular noble faculty of the soul. In Rom. i. 21. it is put for the understanding part, their foolish heart, *i. e.* "their foolish understanding was darkened." And Psal. cxix. 11. it is put for the memory, "Thy word have I hid in my heart." and 1 John iii. 10. it is put for the conscience, which hath in it both the light of the understanding, and the recognitions of the memory : "If our heart condemn us," *i. e.* if our conscience, whose proper office it is to condemn. But here we are to take it more generally for the whole soul, or inner man ; for look what the heart is to the body, that the soul is to the man, and what health is to the heart, that holiness is to the soul.

*Quæ*

*Quod satinitas in corpore, et sanctitas in corde.* The state of the whole body depends upon the soundness and vigour of the heart, and the everlasting state of the whole man upon the good or ill condition of the soul.

And, by keeping the heart, understand the diligent and *constant*\* use and improvement of all holy means and duties, to preserve the soul from sin, and maintain its sweet and free communion with God. Lavature *in loca*, will have the word taken from a besieged garrison begirt by many enemies without, and in danger of being betrayed by the treacherous citizens within; in which danger the soldiers upon pain of death are commanded to watch; and whereas the expression: “Keep,

\* I say constant, for the reason added in the text, extends the duty to all the states and conditions of a Christian's life, and makes it bind *ad semper*. If the heart must be kept because out of it are the issues of life then as long as the issues of life, do flow from it, we are obliged to keep it.

"Keep thy heart," seems to put it upon us as our work, yet it doth not impl a sufficiency or ability in us to do it; we are as able to stop the sun in its course, or make the rivers run backwards, as by our own skill and power to rule and order our hearts. We may as well be our own saviours, as our own keepers, and yet Solomon speaks properly enough, when he saith, "Keep thy heart," because the duty is ours, tho' the power be God's. A natural man without Christ hath no power, a gracious man hath sufficient, but that power he hath, depends upon the exciting and assisting strength of Christ: *Gratia gratiam postulat*. Grace within us is beholding to grace without us, "Without me ye can do nothing," John xv. 5. So much of the matter of the duty.

2. The manner of performing it, is "with all diligence," the Hebrew is very emphatical *cum omni custodia*, "Keep with all keeping;" *q. d.* keep, keep; set double guards, your hearts will be gone else: and this vehemency of expression with which

which the duty is urged, plainly implies how difficult it is to keep our hearts, and how dangerous to let them go.

3. The reason or motive quickening to this duty is very forcible and weighty, "For out of it are the issues of life." That is, it is the source, and fountain of all vital actions and operations. *Hinc fons boni, & peccandi origo*, saith Jerom, it is the spring and original both of good and evil, as the spring in a watch that sets all the wheels in motion. The heart is the treasury, the hand and tongue but the shops, what is in these came from thence; the hand and tongue always begin where the heart ends. The heart contrives and the members execute. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things; for out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaketh," Luke vi. 46. So then, if the heart err in its work, these must needs miscarry in theirs; heart-errors are like the errors of the first concoction,

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which

which cannot be rectified afterwards. Or like the mis-placing and inverting of the stamps and letters in the press, which must needs cause so many erratas in all the copies that are printed off. Oh! then how important a duty is that which is contained in the following proposition?

Doct. *That the keeping and right managing of the heart in every condition, is the great business of a Christian's life.*

When the philosopher saith of waters, is as properly applicable to hearts, *suis terminis difficile continentur*; "tis hard to keep them within any bounds;" God hath set bounds and limits to them, yet how frequently do they transgress, not only the bounds of grace and religion but even of reason and common honesty? *Hic labor hoc opus est*; this is that which affords the Christian matter of labour, fear, and trembling to his dying day. It is not the cleansing of the hand that makes a Christian, for many a hypocrite can shew as fair a hand as he; but the purifying, watching, and right ordering



*What it is to keep the Heart.* 27

dering of the heart; this is the thing that provokes so many sad complaints, and costs so many deep groans and brinish tears. It was the pride of Hezekiah's heart that made him lie in the dust mourning before the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. It was the fear of hypocrisy invading the heart, that made David cry, "Let my heart be found in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed," Psal. cxix. 80. It was the sad experience he had of the divisions and distractions of his own heart in the service of God, that made him pour out that prayer, "Unite my heart to fear thy name," Psal. lxxxvi. 11.

The method in which I shall improve the point, shall be this.

I. shall inquire what the keeping of the heart supposes and imports.

II. Assign divers reasons, why Christians must make this the great work and business of their lives.

III. Point at those special seasons which especially call for this diligence in keeping the heart.

IV. And lastly Apply the whole in several uses.

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I. What the keeping of the heart supposes and imports.

To keep the heart necessarily supposes a previous work of sanctification, which hath set the heart right by giving it a new spiritual bent and inclination ; for as long as the heart is not set right by grace, as to its habitual frame, no duties, or means can keep it right with God. Self is the poise of the unsanctified heart, which biases and moves it in all its designs and actions ; and as long as it is so, it is impossible that any external means should keep it with God.

Man by creation was of one constant uniform frame and tenor of spirit ; held one straight and even course ; not one thought or faculty ravelled or disordered ; his mind had a perfect illumination to understand and know the will of God ; his will a perfect compliance therewith ; his sensitive appetite and other inferior powers stood in a most obedient subordination.

Man by degeneration, is become a most disordered and rebellious creature, contesting with, and opposing

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posing his Maker, as the first cause by self dependence ; as the chiefest good by self-love ; as the highest Lord, by self will ; and as the last end, by self seeking ; and so is quite disordered, and all his acts irregular : his illuminated understanding is clouded with ignorance ; his complying will, full of rebellion and stubbornness ; his subordinate powers, casting off the dominion and government of the superior faculties.

But by regeneration, this disordered soul is set right again ; sanctification being the rectifying, and due framing, or as the scripture phrases it, the renovation of the soul after the image of God, Eph. iv. 24. ; in which, self-dependence is removed by faith ; self-love by the love of God ; self-will by subjection and obedience to the will of God ; and self-seeking by self-denial. The darkened understanding is again illuminated, Eph. i. 18. the refractory will sweetly subdued, Psal. cx. 3. the rebellious appetite, or concupiscence, gradually conquered, Rom. vi. 7. *per tot.* And thus the soul which sin had universally depraved,

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is again by grace restored and recti-  
fied.

This being presupposed, it will not be difficult to apprehend, what it is to keep the heart, which is nothing else but the constant care and diligence of such a renewed man, to preserve his soul in that holy frame to which grace hath reduced it and daily strives to hold it.

For though grace hath in great measure rectified the soul, and given it an habitual and heavenly temper, yet sin often actually discomposes it again, so that even a gracious heart is like a musical instrument, which though it be never so exactly tuned, yet a small matter brings it out of tune again; yea, hang it aside but a little, and it will need setting again, before you can play another lesson on it: even so stands the case with gracious hearts, if they are in frame in one duty, yet how dull, dead and disordered when they come to another; and therefore every duty needs a particular preparation of the heart, "If  
" thou prepare thine heart, and  
" stretch out thy hands towards  
" him,"

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"him," Job xi. 13. Well then, to keep the heart, is carefully to preserve it from sin which disorders it, and maintain that spiritual and gracious frame which fits it for a life of communion with God; and this includes these six acts in it.

1. Frequent observation of the frame of the heart, turning in and examining how the case stands with it, this is one part of the work.

Carnal and formal persons take no heed to this; they cannot be brought to confer with their own hearts:

there are some men and women that have lived forty or fifty years

in the world, and have scarce had one hours discourse with their hearts

all that while: it is an hard thing to bring a man and himself together

upon such an account; but saints know those soliloquies and self-con-

ferences to be of excellent use and advantage. The heathen could say,

*Anima sedendo et quiescendo fit sapiens,*

"the soul is made wise by sitting still in quietness." Though bank-

rupts care not to look into their books of account, yet upright hearts will know whether they go backward or

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forward, "I commune with mine own heart." Psal. lxxvii. 6. The heart can never be kept, until its case be examined and understood.

2. It includes deep humiliations for heart evils and disorders: Thus Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, 2 Chron. xxxii. 6. Thus the people were ordered to spread forth their hands to God in prayer, in a sense of the plague of their own hearts, 1 Kings viii. 38. Upon this account many an upright heart hath been laid low before God, O what an heart have I? they have in their confessions pointed at the heart, the pained place; Lord here is the wound, here is the plague sore: It is with the heart well kept, as it is with the eye, which is a fit emblem of it; if a small dust get into the eye, it will never leave twinkling and watering till it have wept it out; so the upright heart cannot be at rest till it have wept out its troubles, and poured out its complaints before the Lord.

3. It includes earnest supplications and instant prayer for heart-purifying

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ing and rectifying grace, when sin hath defiled and disordered it, so Psal. cxix. 12. "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," and Psal. lxxxvi. 11. "Unite my heart to fear thy name." Saints have always many such petitions depending before the throne of grace: this is the thing which is most pleaded by them with God. When they are praying for outward mercies, haply their spirits may be more remiss, but when it comes to the heart-case, then they intend their spirits to the utmost, fill their mouths with arguments, weep and make supplications; Oh for a better heart! Oh for a heart to love God more! To hate sin more, to walk more evenly with God. Lord deny not to me such a heart whatever thou deny me: Give me a heart to fear thee, love and delight in thee, if I beg my bread in desolate places. It is observed of holy Mr. Bradford, that when he was confessing sin, he would never give over confessing, until he had felt some brokenness of heart for that sin; and when praying for any spiritual mercy, would

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never give over that suit, till he had got some relish of that mercy :

—That is the third thing included in keeping the heart.

4. It includes the imposing of strong engagements and bonds upon ourselves to walk more accurately with God, and avoid the occasions whereby the heart may be induced to sin. Well composed, advised, and deliberate vows, are in some cases, of excellent use to guard the heart against some special sin : “I made a covenant with my eyes,” Job xxxi. 1. By this means, holy ones have overawed their souls, and preserved themselves from defilement by some special heart corruptions.

5. It includes a constant holy jealousy over our own hearts : quick sighted self-jealousy is an excellent preservation from sin. He that will keep his heart, must have the eyes of his soul awake and open upon all the disorderly and tumultuous stirrings of his affections : If the affections break loose, and the passions be stirred, the soul must discover and suppress them before they get to



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an height. O my soul dost thou well in this? My tumultuous thoughts and passions, where is your commission? *State viri, quæ causa vie? quivæ estis in armis?* Virg.

Happy is the man that thus fear-eth always, Prov. xxviii. 14. By this fear of the Lord it is that men depart from evil, shake off security, and preserve themselves from iniquity. He that will keep his heart must feed with fear, rejoice with fear, and pass the whole time of his sojourning here in fear, and all little enough to keep the heart from sin.

6. And lastly, to add no more, it includes the realizing of God's presence with us, and setting the Lord always before us: This the people of God have found a singular means to keep their hearts upright, and awe them from sin. When the eye of our faith is fixed upon the eye of God's omniscience, we dare not let out our thoughts and affections to vanity: Holy Job durst not suffer his heart to yield to an impure, vain thought: And what was it that moved him to so great a circumspection? Why he

36 *What it is to keep the Heart*

tells you : "Doth he not see my  
"ways, and count all my steps?"  
"Job xxxi. 1. Walk before me,"  
saith God to Abraham, "and be  
thou perfect," Gen. xvii. 1. Even  
as parents use to set their children  
in the congregation before them,  
knowing that else they will be toying  
and playing ; so would the heart of  
the best man too, were it not for  
the eye of God.

In these, and such like particulars,  
do gracious souls express the care  
they have of their hearts : They are  
as careful to prevent the breaking  
loose of their corruptions in times  
of temptation as seamen are to bind  
fast their guns, that they break  
not loose in a storm ; as careful to  
preserve the sweetness and comfort  
they have got from God in any duty  
as one that comes out of an hot bath,  
or great sweat, is of taking cold, by  
going forth into the chill air.—  
This is the work, and of all works  
in religion it is the most difficult,  
constant, and important work.

1. It is the hardest work. Heart  
work is hard work indeed. To  
shuffle over religious duties with a  
loose and heedless spirit, will cost  
no

*Heart work constant Work.* 37

no great pains ; but to fet thyself before the Lord, and tie up thy loose and vain thoughts to a constant and serious attendance upon him, this will cost thee something. To attain a facility and dexterity of language in prayer, and put thy meaning into apt and decent expressions, is easy ; but to get thy heart broken for sin while thou art confessing it, melted with free grace whilst thou art blessing God for it, to be really ashamed and humbled through the apprehensions of God's infinite holiness, and to keep thy heart in this frame, not only in, but after duty, will surely cost thee some groans, and travelling pains of soul : to repress the outward acts of sin, and compose the external part of thy life in a laudable and comely manner, is no great matter ; even carnal persons, by the force of common principles, can do this ; but, to kill the root of corruption within, to set and keep up a holy government over thy thoughts, to have all things lie straight and orderly in the heart,—this is not easy.

2. It is a constant work : The keeping

38 *Heart work important Work.*

keeping of the heart is such a work, as is never done till life be done; this labour and our life end together. It is with a Christian in this business, as it is with seamen, that have sprung a leak at sea; if they tug not constantly at the pump, the water encreases upon them, and will quickly sink them. It is vain for them to say, The work is hard, and we are weary. There is no time or condition in the life of a Christian, which will suffer an intermission of this work. It is in the keeping watch over our hearts, as it was in the keeping up of Moses's hands, whilst Israel and Amalek were fighting below, *Exod. xvii. 12.* no sooner do Moses's hands grow weary and sink down, but Amalek prevails. You know it cost David and Peter many a sad day and night for intermitting the watch over their own hearts but a few minutes.

3. It is the most *important* business of a Christian's life: Without this we are but formalists in religion. All our professions, gifts, and duties signify nothing: "My son give me  
"thine heart," *Prov. xxiii. 26.*

God

*Heart-work important work.* 39

God is pleased to call that a gift, which indeed is a debt : he will put this honour upon the creature, to receive it from him in the way of a gift ; but if this be not given him, he regards not whatever else you bring him. There is so much only of worth and value in what we do as there is of heart in it. Concerning the heart, God seems to say, as Joseph of Benjamin : "If you bring not Benjamin with you, you shall not see my face." Among the heathens, when the beast was cut up for sacrifice, the first thing the priest looked upon was the heart, and if that were unsound and naught, the sacrifice was rejected. God rejects all duties, how glorious soever in other respects, offered him without a heart. He that performs duty without a heart, viz. heedlessly, is no more accepted with God, than he that performs it with a double heart, viz. hypocritically, Isa. lxvi. 3. And thus I have briefly opened the nature of the duty, what "is imported in this phrase, Keep thy heart."

II. Next, I shall give you some rational account why Christians should

40 *The Glory of God much concerned*  
should make this the great business  
of their lives to keep their hearts.

The importance and necessity of  
making this our great and main busi-  
ness, will manifestly appear in that,  
1. The honour of God, 2. The sin-  
cerity of our profession. 3. The  
beauty of our conversation, 4. The  
comfort of our souls, 5. The im-  
provement of our graces, and 6.  
Our stability in the hour of temp-  
tation, are all wrapt up in, and de-  
pendant on our sincerity and care in  
the management of this work.

1. The glory of God is much con-  
cerned therein; heart evils are ve-  
ry provoking evils to the Lord.  
The schools do well observe, that  
outward sins are *majoris infamiae*,  
sins of greater intamy; but heart  
sins are *majoris reatus*, sins of deep-  
er guilt. How severely hath the  
great God declared his wrath from  
heaven against heart-wickedness?  
The great crime for which the old  
world stands indicted, is heart wick-  
edness: God saw every imagi-  
nation (or fiction) of their heart was  
only evil, and that continually:  
for which he sent the dreadfullest  
judgement

judgement that was ever executed since the world began: "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of heaven, for it repenteth me that I have made man," Gen. vi. 5, 6, 7 v. 7. We find not their murders, adulteries, blasphemies, (though they were defiled with these) particularly alledged against them; but the evils of their hearts: yea, that which God was so provoked by, as to give up his peculiar inheritance into the enemies hand, was the evil of their hearts, "O Jerusalem wash thine heart from wickedness that thou mayest be saved; how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?" Jer. iv. 14. The wickedness and vanity of their thoughts God took special notice of; and because of this the Chaldean must come upon them as a "Lion from his thickets, and tear them in pieces," v. 7. For the very sin of thoughts it was that God threw down the fallen angels from heaven,

heaven, and keeps them still in everlasting chains to the judgement of the great day ; by which expression is not obscurely intimated some extraordinary judgement to which they are reserved, as prisoners, that have most irons laid upon them, may be supposed to be the greatest malefactors : And what was their sin ? Why, only spiritual wickedness ; for they having no bodily organs, could act nothing externally against God. Yea, meer heart-evils are so provoking, that for them herejects with indignation all the duties that some men perform unto him, “ He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man, he that sacrificeth a lamb as if he cut off a dog’s neck, he that offered an oblation, as if he offered swines blood, he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol,” Isa. lxvi.

3. In what words could the abhorrence of a creature’s actions be more fully expressed by the holy God ? murder and idolatry are not more vile in his account than their sacrifices, though materially such as himself appointed : And what made them



them so? The following words inform us; "Their soul delighted in their abominations."

To conclude, such is the vileness of meer heart-sins, that the scriptures sometimes intimate the difficulty of pardon for them. So in the case of Simon Magus, Acts viii. 21. his heart was not right, he had vile thoughts of God, and the things of God; the Apostle bids him repent and pray, if perhaps the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him. Oh, then, never slight heart-evils! for by these God is highly wronged and provoked, and for this reason let every Christian make it his work to keep his heart with all diligence.

2. The sincerity of our profession depends much upon the care and conscience we have in keeping our hearts; for it is most certain, that a man is but an hypocrite in his profession, how curious soever he be in the externals of religion, that is heedless and careless of the frame of his heart: You have a pregnant instance of this in the case of Jehu: "But Jehu took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord God of Israel."

44 *The Sincerity of Profession, &c.*

“Israel with his heart,” 2 Kings x. 31. That context gives us an account of the great service performed by Jehu against the house of Ahab and Baal ; as also, of a great temporal reward given him by God for that service, even that his children to the fourth generation should sit upon the throne of Israel ; and yet in these words, Jehu is censured for an hypocrite ; though God approved and rewarded the work, yet he abhorred and rejected the person that did it, as hypocritical : And wherein lay his hypocrisy ? In this, that he took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord, with his heart ; *i. e.* he did all insincerely, and for self-ends ; and though the work he did was materially good, yet he not purging his heart from those unworthy self-designs in doing it, was an hypocrite. And Simon, of whom we spake before, though he appeared such a person, that the Apostle could not regularly refuse him, yet his hypocrisy was quickly discovered : And what discovered it ? this, that though he professed and associated himself with the saints, yet he

he was a stranger to the mortification of heart-sins : " Thy heart is " not right with God," Acts viii. 21. It is true, there is a great difference among Christians themselves in their diligence and dexterity about heart-work ; some are more conversant than others are ; but he that takes no heed to his heart, he that is not careful to order it aright before God, is but a hypocrite : " And they come unto thee as the " people cometh, and sit before " thee (as my people) and they hear " thy words, but they will not do " them ; for with their mouth they " shew much love, but their heart " goes after, their covetousness," Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. Here was a company of formal hypocrites, as is evident by that expression, " as my people ;" like them but not of them : And what made them so ? their out-side was fair ; here were reverend postures, high professions, much seeming joy and delight in ordinances, " Thou art to them as a " lovely song ; yea, but for all that, they kept not their hearts with God in those duties ; their hearts were commanded by their lusts, they went after

46 *The Beauty of the Conversation*

after their covetousness. Had they kept their heart with God, all had been well, but not regarding which way their heart went in duty, they lay the core of their hypocrisy.

Object. If any upright soul should hence infer, Then I am an hypocrite too, for many times my heart departs from God in duty, do what I can, yet I cannot hold it close with God.

Sol. To this I answer, the very objection carries in it its own solution: Thou sayest, do what I can, yet I cannot keep my heart with God. Soul, if thou dost what thou canst, thou hast the blessing of an upright, though thro' Infirmary thou art afflicted with a discomposed, heart. There remains still some wildness in the thoughts and fancies of the best of men while in the Body, but if you find a care before to prevent them, and opposition against them when they come, grief and sorrow afterwards; you will find enough to clear you from reigning hypocrisy. (1.) This fore-care is seen partly in laying up the word in thine heart to prevent them, "Thy  
" word

*depends upon keeping the Heart 47*

“ word have I hid in mine heart,  
“ that I might not sin against thee,”  
Psal. cxix. 11. partly in our endeavours to engage our hearts to God, Jer. xxx. 21. and partly in begging preventing grace from God in our onsets upon duty, Psal. cxix. 36, 37. It is a good sign where this care goes before a duty. And (2.) It is a sweet sign of uprightness to oppose them in their first rise : “ I hate vain thoughts,” Psal. cxix. 113. The spirit lusteth against the flesh,” Gal. 5. 17. And (3.) Thy after grief discovers thy upright heart : If with Hezekiah thou art humbled for the evils of thy heart, thou hast no reason from these disorders to question the integrity of it ; but, to suffer sin to lodge quietly in the heart, to let thy heart habitually and uncontroledly wander from God, is a sad and dangerous symptom indeed.

3. The beauty of our conversation arises from the heavenly frame, and holy order of our spirits : there is a spiritual lustre and beauty in the conversation of saints ; “ the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,

48 *The Beauty of the Conversation.*

neighbour," they shine as the lights of the world ; but whatever lustre and beauty is in their lives, comes from the excellency of their spirits ; as the candle within puts a lustre upon the lanthorn in which it shines. It is impossible that a disordered and neglected heart should ever produce a well ordered conversation : And since, as the text observes, the issues or streams of life flow out of the heart as their fountain, it must needs follow, that such as the heart is the life will be : Hence, 1 Pet. ii. 11, 12. " Abstain from fleshly  
" lusts—having your conversation  
" honest," beautiful, as the Greek word, imports. So " Let the wicked forsake his way, and the un-  
" righteous man his thoughts," Isa. lv. 7. His way notes the course of his life, his thoughts the frame of his heart ; and therefore, since the way and course of his life flows from his thoughts, or the frame of his heart, both or neither will be forsaken. The heart is the womb of all actions ; these actions are either virtually or feminally contained in the thoughts ; these thoughts being  
once

*depends upon keeping the Heart.* 49

once made up into affections, are quickly made out into suitable actions and practices. If the heart be wicked, then as Christ saith, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries," &c. Mat. xv. 19. Mark the order; first, wanton or revengeful thoughts, then unclean or murderous practices.

And if the heart be holy or spiritual, then, as David speaks from sweet experience: "My heart is inditing a good matter; I speak of the things which I have made: my tongue is as the pen of a ready writer." Psal. xlv. 1. Here is a life richly beautified with good works: Some ready made, "I will speak of the things which I have made:" others upon the wheel making, "My heart is inditing;" but both proceeding from the heavenly frame of his heart.

Put but the heart in frame, and the life will quickly discover that it is so. I think it is not very difficult to discern by the duties and converses of Christians, what frames their spirits are under; take a Christian in a good frame, and how serious,  
C heavenly,

50 *The Beauty of the Conversation.*

heavenly, and profitable will his  
converses and duties be ! What a  
lovely companion is he, during the  
continuance of it ! it would do any  
one's heart good to be with him at  
such a time : " The mouth of the  
" righteous speaketh wisdom, and  
" his tongue talketh of judgment ;  
" the law of his God is in his heart."  
" Ps. xxxvii. 30, 31.

When the heart is up with God,  
and full of God, how dexterously  
and ingenuously will he wind in  
spiritual discourse, improving eve-  
ry occasion and advantage to some  
heavenly purpose, few words run  
then at the waste spout.

And what else can be the reason,  
why the discourses and duties of  
many a Christian are become so  
frothy and unprofitable ; their com-  
munion both with God, and one a-  
nother became as a dry flake, but  
because their hearts are neglected.  
Surely this must be the reason of it,  
and verily it is an evil greatly to be  
bewailed ; for as by this, Christian  
fellowship is become a sapless thing :  
So the attracting beauty that was  
wont to shine from the conversation  
of



*The Joys of Assurance.* 51

of the saints upon the faces and consciences of the world, which if it did not allure and bring them in love with the ways of God, yet at least left a testimony in their consciences of the excellency of those men and their way, this is in a great measure lost, to the unspeakable detriment of religion.

Time was, when Christians did carry it at such a rate, that the world stood at a gaze at them, as that word, 1 Pet. iv. 4. imports: Their life and language was of a different strain from others; their tongues discovered them to be Galileans wherever they came; but now, since vain speculations, and fruitless controversies have so much obtained, and heart-work, practical godliness, so much neglected among professors, the case is sadly altered, their discourse is become like other mens: If they come among you now, they may, to allude to that, "Hear every man speak in his own language," Acts ii. 6. And truly I have little hope to see this evil repaired, until Christians fall again to their old work, until they ply heart-

52 *Three Joys of Assurance*

work closer : When the salt of heavenly mindedness is again cast into the spring, the streams will run clearer and sweeter.

4. The comfort of our souls doth much depend upon the keeping of our hearts; for he that is negligent in attending his own heart, is, ordinarily, a great stranger to assurance, and the sweet comforts flowing from it.

Indeed, if the Antinomian doctrine were true, which teaches you to reject all marks and signs for the trial of your conditions, telling you it is only the Spirit that immediately assures you, by witnessing your adoption directly without them, then you might be careless of your hearts, yea, strangers to them, and yet no strangers to comfort ; but since both scripture and experience do confute this dotage, I hope you will never look for comfort in that unscriptural way. I deny not but it is the work and office of the Spirit to assure you ; and yet do confidently affirm, that if ever you attain assurance in the ordinary way, wherein God dispences it, you must take pains

*depend on keeping the Heart.* 53

pains with your own hearts : you may expect your comforts upon easier terms, but I am mistaken if ever you enjoy them upon any other : " Give all diligence : " " Prove yourselves : " this is the scripture way. I remember Mr. Roberts, in his " Treatise of the Covenant," tells us, that he knew a Christian, who, in the infancy of his Christianity, so vehemently panted after the assurance of God's love, that, for a long time together, he earnestly desired some voice from heaven ; yea, sometimes walking in the solitary fields, earnestly desired some miraculous voice from the trees and stones there ; this after many desires and longings was denied him ; but in time a better was afforded in the ordinary way of searching the word and his own heart. An instance of the like nature the learned Gerson gives us, of one that was driven by temptation upon the very borders of desperation ; at last, being sweetly settled and assured, one asked him, How he attained it ? he answered, *Non ex nova aliqua revelatione, &c.* Not by any extraordinary revelation,

54 *The Joys of Assurance*

on, but by subjecting his understanding to the scriptures, and comparing his own heart with them. The spirit indeed assures by witnessing our adoption, and he witnesseth two ways: 1. Objectively; *i. e.* by working those graces in our souls which are the conditions of the promise; and so the Spirit and his graces in us are all one: the Spirit of God dwelling in us, is a mark of our adoption. Now the Spirit cannot be discerned in his essence, but in his operations; and to discern these is to discern the Spirit; and how these should be discerned without serious searching and diligent watching of the heart, I cannot imagine. 2. Effectively, *i. e.* by irradiating the soul with a grace, discovering light, shining upon his own work: and this in order of nature follows the former work; he first infuses the grace, and then opens the eye of the soul to see it. Now, since the heart is the subject of that infused grace, even this way of the Spirit's witnessing also includes the necessity of keeping carefully our own hearts: For, 1. A neglected

neglected heart is so confused and dark, that the little grace that is in it is not ordinarily discernable. The most accurate and laborious Christians, that take most pains, and spend most time about their hearts, do yet find it very difficult to discover the pure and genuine workings of the Spirit there : how then shall the Christian, which is comparatively negligent and remiss about heart-work, be ever able to discover the pure and genuine workings of it ? Sincerity, which is the *quæsitum*, the thing sought for, lies in the heart, like a small piece of gold in the bottom of a river, he that will find it, must stay till the water shall be clear and settled, and then he will see it sparkling at the bottom ; and that the heart may be clear and settled, how much pains and watching, care and diligence will it cost ?

2. God doth not usually indulge lazy and negligent souls with the comforts of assurance, he will not so much as seem to patronize sloth and carelessness, he will give it, but it shall be in his own way ; His

56 *The Improvement of Grace*

command hath united our care and comfort together : They are mistaken that think the beautiful child of assurance may be born without pangs. Ah how many solitary hours have the people of God spent in heart-examination ! How many times have they looked into the world, and then into their hearts ? Sometimes they thought they discovered sincerity, and were even ready to draw forth the triumphant conclusion of assurance, then comes a doubt they cannot resolve, and dashes all again : Many hopes and fears, doubtings, and reasonings they have had in their own breasts, before they arrived at a comfortable settlement.

To conclude, Suppose it possible for a careless Christian to attain assurance, yet it is impossible he should long retain it ; for it is with those whose hearts are big with the joys of assurance, as with a pregnant woman subject to miscarriages ; if extraordinary care be not used, it is a thousand to one if ever she embrace a living child : So it is here, a little pride, vanity, carelessness,  
dashes

*depends on keeping the Heart.* 57

dashes all that for which thou hast been labouring a long time in many a weary duty. Since then the joy of our life, the comfort of our souls, rises and falls with our diligence in this work, "Keep your hearts with all diligence."

5. The improvement of our graces depends on the keeping of our hearts; I never knew grace thrive in a negligent and careless soul: The habits and roots of grace are planted in the heart; and the deeper they are radicated there, the more thriving and flourishing grace is. We read of "being rooted in grace," "Eph. iii. 17. Grace in the heart is the root of every gracious word in the mouth, and of every holy work in the hand, Psal. cxvi. 10. 2 Cor. iv. 13. It is true, Christ is the root of a Christian, but Christ is *origo originans*, the originating root and grace; *origo originata*, a root originated, planted and influenced by Christ; according as this thrives under divine influences, so the acts of grace are more or less fruitful and vigorous. Now in a heart not kept with care and diligence, these fruc-

58 *The Improvement of Grace, &c.*  
tifying influences are stopt and cut  
off, multitudes of vanities break in  
upon it, and devour its strength.  
The heart is, as it were, the pas-  
ture in which multitudes of thoughts  
are fed every day ; a gracious heart,  
diligently kept, feeds many preci-  
ous thoughts of God in a day :  
“ How precious are thy thoughts to  
“ me, O God ! how great is the  
“ sum of them ! If I should count  
“ them, they are more in number  
“ than the sand : and when I a-  
“ wake I am still with thee,” Psal.  
“ cxxxix. 17. And as the gracious  
heart feeds and nourishes them, so  
they refresh and feast the heart :  
“ My soul is filled as with marrow  
“ and fatness whilst I think upon  
“ thee,” &c. Psal. lxxiii. 5. 6. But in  
the disregarded heart, swarms of  
vain and foolish thoughts are perpe-  
tually working, and jostle out those  
spiritual ideas and thoughts of God,  
by which the soul should be refresh-  
ed.

Besides, the careless heart makes  
nothing out of any duty or ordinance  
it performs or attends on, and  
yet these are the conduits of hea-  
ven



ven from whence grace is watered and made fruitful ; a man may go with an heedless spirit from ordinances, abide all his days under the choicest teachings, and yet never be improved by them ; for heart-neglect is a leak in the bottom, no heavenly influences, how rich soever, abide in that soul, Matth. xiii, 3, 4. The heart that lies open and common like the high-way, free for all passengers, when the seed fell on it, the fowls came and devoured it. Alas ! it is not enough to hear unless we take heed how we hear ; a man may pray, and never the better, unless we watch unto prayer. In a word, all ordinances, means, and duties are blessed unto the improvement of grace, according to the care and strictness we use in keeping our hearts in them.

6. *Lastly,* The *stability* of our souls in the hour of temptation, will be much according to the care and conscience we have of keeping our hearts : The careless heart is an easy prey to Satan in the hour of temptation ; his main batteries are raised against the fort royal, the heart : If

60 *Stability in Temptation*

he win that, he wins all, for it commands the whole man : and alas ! how easy a conquest is a neglected heart ! It is no more difficult to surprise it, than for an enemy to enter that city, whose gates are open and ungarded. It is the watchful heart that discovers and suppresses the temptation before it come to its strength. Divines observe this to be the method in which temptations are ripened and brought to their full strength : there is first the irritation of the object, or that power it hath to work upon and provoke our corrupt nature, which is either done by the real presence of the object, or else by speculation, when the object, though absent, is held out by the phantasy before the soul. *Secondly*, Then follows the motion of the sensitive appetite, which is stirred and provoked by the phantasy, representing it as a sensual good, as having profit or pleasure in it. *Thirdly*, Then there is a consultation in the mind about it deliberating about the likeliest means of accomplishing it. *4thly*, Next follows the election or choise of the

*obtained by keeping the Heart.* 61

the will, *Fifthly* and *lastly*, The desire or full engagements of the will to it. All this may be done in a few moments, for the debates of the soul are quick, and soon ended : when it comes thus far, then the heart is won, Satan hath entered victoriously, and displayed his colours upon the wall of that royal fort. But had the heart been well guarded at first, it had never come to this height ; the temptation had been stopped in the first or second act. And indeed there it is stopt easily, for it is in the motions of a tempted soul to sin, as in the motion of a stone falling from the brow of an hill ; it is easily stopt at first, but, when once it is set a going, *vires acquirit eundo* : and therefore it is the greatest wisdom in the world to observe the first motions of the heart, to check and stop sin there : the motions of sin are weakest at first ; a little care and watchfulness may prevent much mischief now, which the careless heart not heeding, is brought within the power of temptation, as the Syrians were brought blindfold into the midst of Samaria, before they

62 *How the Heart is kept from Pride*  
they knew where they were.

By this time, Reader, I hope thou art fully satisfied how consequential and necessary a work the keeping of thy heart is, it being a duty that wraps up so many dear interests of the soul in it.

III. Next, according to the method propounded, I proceed to point out those special seasons in the life of a Christian, which require and call for our utmost diligence in keeping the heart; for though, as was observed before, the duty bind, *ad semper*, and there be no time or condition of life, in which we may be excused from this work, yet there are some signal seasons, critical hours, requiring more than a common vigilance over the heart.

And the first:

*1st Season.* “Is the time of prosperity, when Providence smiles upon us, and dandles us upon her knee. Now, Christian, keep thy heart with all diligence, for now it will be exceeding apt to grow secure, proud and earthly: *Rara virtus est humilitas honorata*, saith Bernard, to see a man humble under

*and secured in a prosperous State. 63*

"under prosperity, is one of the  
"greatest rarities in the world.  
"Even a good Hezekiah could not  
"hide a vain glorious temper under  
"this temptation, and hence that  
"caution to Israel: 'And it shall  
"be when the Lord thy God shall  
"have brought thee into the land  
"which he sware to thy fathers, to  
"Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to  
"give thee great and goodly cities  
"which thou buildedst not, and  
"houses full of all good things  
"which thou filledst not, &c.  
"then beware lest thou forget the  
"Lord,' Deut. vi. 10, 11, 12.  
And indeed so it fell out, for Je-  
rusalem waxed fat and kicked, Deut.  
xxxii. 15."

Now, then, the first case will  
be this, *viz.*

Case 1. How a Christian may  
keep his heart from pride and carnal  
security under the smiles of Provi-  
dence, and confluence of creature-  
comforts.

There are seven choice helps to  
secure the heart from the dange-  
rous snares of prosperity—the first  
is this:

i. To

## 64 How to keep the Heart from Pride.

1. To consider the dangerous insinuating temptations attending a pleasant and prosperous condition. Few, yea, very few of those that live in the pleasures and prosperity of this world, escape everlasting perdition: "It is easier," saith Christ, "for a camel to pass thro' the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matth. xix. 24. "Not many mighty, not many noble are called." 1 Cor. i. 26. It might justly make us tremble, when the scripture tells us in general, that few shall be saved; much more when it tells us, that of that rank and sort of which we are, but few shall be saved. When Joshua called all the tribes of Israel, to lot upon them for the discovery of Achan, doubtless Achan feared; when the tribe of Judah was taken, his fear encreased; but, when the family of the Zarahites was taken, it was time then to tremble. So when the scripture comes so near, as to tell us, that of such a sort of men very few shall escape, it is time to look about; *Miror si potest servari aliquis rectorum,*

*and Security in a prosperous State.* 65  
rum, saith Chrysostome, "I should  
wonder if any of the rulers be  
saved." O how many have been  
coached to hell in the chariots of  
earthly pleasure, whilst others have  
been whipt to heaven by the rod of  
affliction? How few, like the  
daughter of Tyre, come to Christ  
with a gift! How few among the  
rich intreat his favour!

2. It may keep us yet more hum-  
ble and watchful in prosperity, if  
we consider that among Christians  
many have been much the worse  
for it. How good had it been for  
some of them if they had never  
known prosperity! When they  
were in a low condition, how hum-  
ble, spiritual and heavenly were  
they; but when advanced, what  
an apparent alteration hath been up-  
on their spirits: It was so with Is-  
rael when they were in a low con-  
dition in the wilderness; then Israel  
was, "Holiness to the Lord," Jer.  
2. 23. but when they came into  
Canaan, and were fed in a fat pas-  
ture, "We are Lords, we will  
come no more unto thee," Vers.  
31. Outward gains are ordinarily  
obtained

66 *How the Heart is kept, &c.*

obtained with inward losses, as, in a low condition, their civil employments were wont to have a tang and favour of their duties, so in an exalted condition, their duties commonly have a tang of the world. He indeed is rich in grace, whose graces are not hindered by his riches; there are but few Jehosaphats in the world, of whom it is said, "He had silver and gold in abundance, and his heart was lifted up in the ways of Gods commands," 2 Chr. xxii. 5, 6. Will not this keep thy heart humble in prosperity, to think how dear many godly men have paid for their riches, that through them they have lost that which all the world cannot purchase? Then in the next place:

3. Keep down thy vain heart by this consideration, That God values no man a jot the more for these things. God values no man by his outward excellencies, but by inward graces; they are the internal ornaments of the spirit, which are of great price in God's eyes, 1 Pet. iii. 4. He despises all worldly glory, and accepts no man's person; but,

"in



*How the Heart is kept humble &c. 67*

"in every nation, he that feareth  
"God, and worketh righteousness,  
"is accepted of him," Acts x. 35.

Indeed if the judgement of God  
went by the same rule that man's  
doth, we might value ourselves by  
these things, and stand upon them :  
but as one said (when dying) I shall  
not appear before God as a doctor,  
but as a man : *Tantus quisquis est,*  
*quantus est aqud Deum.* So much  
every man is, and no more, as he  
is in the judgment of God. Doth  
thy heart yet swell, and will neither  
of the former considerations keep it  
humble.

4. Consider how bitterly many  
persons have bewailed their folly  
when they came to die, that ever  
they set their hearts upon these things,  
and heartily wished they had never  
known them. What a sad story  
was that of Pius V. who dying, cri-  
ed out despairingly, When I was in  
a low condition, I had some hopes  
of salvation ; but when I was ad-  
vanced to be a Cardinal, I greatly  
doubted it ; but since I came to the  
Popedom, I have no hope at all.  
Mr. Spencer also tells us a real, but  
sad

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sad story of a rich oppressor, who had scraped up a great estate for his only son : When he came to die, he called his son to him, and said, Son, do you indeed love me ? the son answered, that nature, besides his paternal indulgence had obliged him to that ; then said the father, express it by this, hold thy finger in the candle as long as I am saying a Pater-Noster ; the son attempted, but could not endure it ; upon that the father brake out into these expressions : Thou canst not suffer the burning of thy finger for me, but to get this wealth, I have hazarded my soul for thee, and must burn body and soul in hell for thy sake ; thy pains would have been but for a moment, but mine will be unquenchable fire.

5. The heart may be kept humble by considering of what a clogging nature earthly things are to a soul heartily engaged in the way to heaven ; they shut out much of heaven from us at present, though they may not shut us out of heaven at last. If thou consider thyself under the notion of a stranger in this world,

world, travelling for heaven, and seeking a better country, thou hast then as much reason to be taken and delighted with these things, as a weary horse hath with a heavy cloak-bag. There was a serious truth in that Atheistical scoff of Julian, when he took away the Christians estates, and told them it was to make them fitter for the kingdom of heaven.

6. Is thy spirit for all this flatter-ent and lofty? then urge upon it the consideration of that awful day of reckoning, wherein, according to our receipts of mercies, shall be our accounts for them. And methinks, this should awe and humble the vaineſt heart ever was in the breast of a saint. Know for certain, that the Lord records all the mercies that ever he gave thee, from the beginning to the end of thy life: "Remember, O my people, from Shittim unto Gilgal," &c. Micha vi. 5. Yea, they are axactly numbered, and recorded, in order to an account; and thy account will be suitable: "To whomsoever much is given, of him  
— much

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“much shall be required,” Luke xii.  
48. You are but stewards, and your  
Lord will come to take an account  
of you ; and what a great account  
have you to make who have much  
of this world in your hands ; what  
swift witnesses will your enemies be  
against you, if this be the best fruit  
of them ?

7. It is a very humbling conside-  
“ration, That the mercies of God  
“should work otherwise upon my  
“spirit than they use to do upon  
“the spirits of others, to whom  
“they come as sanctified mercies  
“from the love of God.” Ah  
Lord ! What a sad consideration is  
this ! enough to lay me in the dust,  
when I consider, 1. That their  
mercies have greatly humbled them:  
the higher God hath raised them,  
the lower they have laid themselves  
before God. Thus did Jacob,  
when God had given him much  
substance : “And Jacob said, I  
“am not worthy of the least of all  
“thy mercies, and all the truth  
“which thou hast shewed thy ser-  
“vant ; for with my staff I pass-  
“ed over this Jordan, and now I  
“am

"am become two bands." Gen. xxxii. 5. 10. And thus it was with holy David, when God had confirmed the promise to him, to build him an house, and not reject him as he did Saul, he goes in before the Lord, and saith, "Who am I, what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto," 2 Sam. vii. 18. And so indeed God required, when Israel was bringing to God the first-fruits of Canaan, they were to say, "A Syrian, ready to perish, was my father," &c. Deut. xxvi. 5. Do others raise God the higher for raising them? and the more God raises me, the more shall I abuse him and exalt myself? O what a sad thing is this! 2. Others have freely ascribed the glory of all their enjoyments to God, and magnified not themselves, but him, for their mercies. So David: "Let thy name be magnified, and the house of thy servant be established," 2 Sam. xxvi. 26. He doth not fly upon the mercy, and suck out the sweetness of it, looking no farther than his own comfort; no, he cares for no mercy except

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except God be magnified in it. So  
David, when God had delivered  
him from all his enemies, saith,  
“The Lord is my strength, and my  
“rock; he is become my salvation  
“on,” Psal. xviii. 2. They did  
not put the crown upon their own  
heads as I do. 3. The mercies of  
God have been melting mercies un-  
to others, melting their souls in love  
to the God of their mercies. So  
Hannah, when she received the  
mercy of a son, said, “My soul  
rejoice in the Lord;” 1 Sam. ii. 1.  
not in the mercy, but in the God  
of mercy. And so Mary: “My  
“soul doth magnify the Lord, my  
“spirit rejoiceth in God my Savi-  
“our.” Luke i. 46. The word sig-  
nifies, to make more room for God:  
their hearts were not contracted, but  
the more enlarged to God. 4. The  
merces of God have been mighty  
restraints to keep others from sin.  
So Ezra ix. 13. “Seeing thou our  
“God, hast given us such a deli-  
“verance as this, should we again  
“break thy commandments?” In-  
genuous souls have felt the force of  
the obligations of love, and merc

upon

upon them. 5. To conclude : The mercies of God to others have been as oil to the wheel of their obedience, and makes them fitter for service, 2 Chron. xxvii. 5. Now if mercies work contrarily upon my heart, what cause have I to be afraid that they come not to me in love ! I tell you, this is enough to damp the spirit of any saint, to see what sweet they have had on others, and what sad effects on him.

2. Season. The second special season in the life of a Christian, requiring more than common diligence to keep his heart, is the time of adversity. When providence frowns upon you, and blasts your outward comforts, then look to your hearts, keep them with all diligence from repining against God, or fainting under his hand ; for troubles, though sanctified, are troubles still ; even sweet briar, and holy thistle have their prickles. Jonah was a good man, and yet, how pettish was his heart under affliction ? Job was the mirror of patience, yet how was his heart discomposed by  
D                      trouble ?

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“trouble? You will find it as  
“hard to get a composed spirit under  
“great afflictions, as it is to be  
“quick-silver. Oh the hurries and  
“tumults which they occasion even  
“in the best hearts! Well then, the  
“second Case will be this:”

Case 2d. How a Christian under  
great afflictions, may keep his heart  
from repining or desponding under  
the hand of God? Now, there  
are nine special helps I shall here  
offer, to keep thy heart in this con-  
dition; and the first shall be this  
to work upon your hearts this great  
truth.

1. That by these cross providences,  
God is faithfully pursuing the  
great design of electing love upon  
the souls of his people, and ordering  
all these afflictions as means sancti-  
fied to that end.

Afflictions fall not out by casualty  
but by counsel, Job v. 6. Eph. i. 11.  
By this counsel of God, they are  
ordained as means of such spiritual  
good to saints, “By this shall the  
“iniquity of Jacob be purged,” &c.  
Isa. xxvii. 9. “But he for our pro-  
fit,” &c. Heb. xii. 10. “All things



"work together for good," Rom. vii. 28. They are God's workmen upon our hearts, to pull down the pride and carnal security of them; and being so, their nature is changed; they are turned into blessings and benefits: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted," Psal. cxix. 71. And sure, then, thou hast no reason to quarrel with, but rather to admire, that God should concern himself so much in thy good, to use any means for the accomplishing of it. Paul could bless God, if by any means he might attain the resurrection of the dead, Phil. iii. 11. "My brethren, saith James, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations," 1 Jam. ii. 3. He saith to thee in this case, as to Peter, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

2d Help. Though God hath reserved to himself a liberty of afflicting his people, yet he hath tied up his own hands by promise, never to take away his loving kindness from them. Can I look that scripture in the face with a repining discontented

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tented spirit ? “ I will be his Father,  
“ and he shall be my son ; if he  
“ commit iniquity, I will chasten  
“ him with the rod of men : never-  
“ theless my mercy shall not depart  
“ away from him,” 2 Sam. vii. 14.  
O my heart, my haughty heart !  
dost thou well to be discontented,  
when God hath given thee the  
whole tree, with all the clusters of  
comfort growing on it, because he  
suffers the wind to blow down a few  
leaves ? Christians have two sorts of  
goods, the goods of the throne, and  
the goods of the footstool ; movea-  
bles and immoveables : If God have  
secured these, never let my heart  
be troubled at the loss of those. In-  
deed, if he had cut off his love, or  
discovenanted my soul, I had rea-  
son to be cast down ; but this he  
hath not, he cannot do.

3d Help. It is of marvellous effi-  
cacy to keep the heart from sinking  
under affliction, to call to mind,  
That thine own father hath the or-  
dering of them. Not a creature  
moves hand or tongue against thee,  
but by his permission. Suppose the  
cup be a bitter cup, yet it is the cup  
which

which thy Father hath given thee to drink, and canst thou suspect poison to be in that cup which he delivers thee? Foolish man, put home the case to thine own heart, consult with thine own bowels: canst thou find in thy heart to give thy child that which would hurt and undo him? no, thou wouldst as soon hurt thyself as him: "If thou then be-  
"ing evil, knowest how to give  
"good gifts unto thy children, how  
"much more doth your heavenly  
"Father?" Matth. vii. 11. The very consideration of his nature, a God of love, pity, and tender mercies, or of his relation to thee, as a father, husband, friend, might be security enough, if he had not spoken a word to quiet thee in this case.

4<sup>th</sup> Help. God respects you as much in a low, as in a high condition; and therefore it need not so much trouble you to be made low: Nay to speak home, he manifests more of his love, grace, and tenderness, in the time of affliction, than prosperity. As God did not at first chuse you, because you were high, so he will not forsake you be-

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cause you are low. Men may look  
shy upon you, and alter their re-  
spects as your condition is altered.  
When Providence hath blasted your  
estates, your summer friends may  
grow strange, as fearing you may  
be troublesome to them: But will  
God do so? No no: "I will never  
leave thee nor forsake thee," Heb.  
xiii. 5. Indeed, if adversity and po-  
verty could bar you from access to  
God, it were a sad condition; but,  
you may go to God as freely as e-  
ver: "My God," saith the church,  
"will hear me," Mic. vii. Poor  
David, when stript out of all earth-  
ly comforts, could yet encourage  
himself in the Lord his God, and  
why cannot you? Suppose your  
husband or child had lost all at sea,  
and should come to you in rags,  
could you deny the relation, or re-  
fuse to entertain him? If you would  
not, much less will God. Why  
then are you so troubled? though  
your condition be changed, your  
Father's love and respects are not  
changed.

5th Help. And what if by the loss  
of outward comforts, God will pre-  
serve

erve your souls from the ruining power of temptation? Sure, then, you have little cause to sink your hearts by such sad thoughts about them. Are not these earthly enjoyments, the things that make men shrink and warp in times of trial? For the love of these many have forsaken Christ in such an hour: "He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions," Matth. xix. 22. And if this be God's design, what have I done in quarrelling with him about it! We see mariners in a storm, can throw over board, rich bales of silk, and precious things, to preserve the vessel and their lives with it, and every one saith they act prudently;—we know it is usual for soldiers in a city besieged, to batter down or burn the fairest buildings without the walls, in which the enemy may shelter in the siege, and no man doubts but it is wisely done:—Such as have gangrened legs or arms, can willingly stretch them out to be cut off, and not only thank, but pay the surgeon for his pains; and must God only be repined at, for casting over what would sink you

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in a storm, for pulling down that  
which would advantage your ene-  
my in the siege of temptation, for  
cutting off what would endanger  
your everlasting life? Oh inconfi-  
derate, ungrateful man! are not  
these things for which thou grieve-  
st, the very things that have ruined  
thousands of souls? Well, what  
Christ doth in this, thou knowest  
not now, but hereafter thou mayest.

*6th Help.* It would much stay  
the heart under adversity, to con-  
sider,—That God, by such hum-  
bling providences, may be accom-  
plishing that for which you have long  
prayed and waited? And should you  
be troubled at that? Say Christian,  
hast thou not many prayers depend-  
ing before God upon such accounts  
as these,—that he would keep thee  
from sin? discover to thee the emp-  
tiness and insufficiency of the crea-  
ture? that he would kill and mor-  
tify thy lusts, that thy heart may  
never find rest in any enjoyment but  
Christ? Why now, by such hum-  
bling and impoverishing strokes,  
God may be fulfilling thy desire.  
Wouldst thou be kept from sin? lo,  
“He hath hedged up thy way with  
“thorns.”

“thorns.” Wouldst thou see the creature’s vanity? thy affliction is a fair glass to discover it; for the vanity of the creature is never so effectually and sensibly discovered, as in our own experience of it.—Wouldst thou have thy corruptions mortified? this is the way. Now God takes away the food and fuel that maintained them; for as prosperity begat, and fed them, so adversity, when sanctified, is a means to kill them.—Wouldst thou have thy heart to rest no where but in the bosom of God? What better way canst thou imagine providence should take to accomplish thy desire, than by pulling from under thy head, that soft pillow of creature-delights on which thou restedst before? and yet thou fretest at this, peevish child, how dost thou exercise thy Father’s patience! If he delay to answer thy prayers, thou art ready to say he regards thee not: if he do that which really answers the scope and main end of them, but not in the way thou expectedst, thou quarrelledst with him for that, as if, instead of answering, he were crossing

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all thy hopes and aims : Is this ingenuous ? Is it not enough that God is so gracious to do what thou desirest, but thou must be so impudent to expect he should do it in the way which thou prescribest ?

7th Help. Again, it may stay thy heart, if thou consider, That in these troubles, God is about that work, which if thou didst see the design of, thy soul would rejoice. We poor creatures are bemisted with much ignorance, and are not able to discern how particular providences work towards God's end ; and therefore, like Israel in the wilderness, are often murmuring because providence leads us about in a howling desert, where we are exposed to straits, though yet, then he led them, and is now leading us, " by the right way to a city of habitations." If you could but see how God in his secret counsel hath exactly laid the whole plot and design of thy salvation, even to the smallest means and circumstances—this way, and by these means, such a one shall be saved, and by no other—such a number of afflictions I appoint this man,



man, at this time, and in this order, they shall befall him thus, and thus they shall work for him—Could you, I say, but discern the admirable harmony of divine dispensations, their mutual relations to each other, together with the general respect and influence they all have unto the last end, of conditions in the world, you would chuse that you are now in, had you liberty to make your own choice. Providence is like a curious piece of arras, made up of a thousand shreds, which single, we know not what to make of, but put together, and stitched up orderly, they represent a beautiful history to the eye. As God works all things according to the counsel of his own will, so that counsel of God hath ordained this as the best way to bring about thy salvation: Such a one hath a proud heart, so many humbling providences I appoint for him; such an one an earthly heart, so many impoverishing providences for him. Did you but see this, I need say no more to support the most dejected heart.

8th Help. Further, it would much

D 6

conduce

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conduce to the settlement of your  
hearts, to consider, That by fretting  
and discontent, you do yourselves  
more injury than all the afflictions  
you lie under could do. Your own  
discontent is that which arms your  
troubles with a sting; it is you that  
make your burden heavy, by strug-  
gling under it: Could you but lie  
quiet under the hand of God, your  
condition would be much easier and  
sweeter than it is: *Impatiens ægrotus  
crudelem facit medicum.* This makes  
God lay on more strokes, as a Fa-  
ther will upon a stubborn child that  
receives not correction.

Besides, it unfits the soul to pray  
over its troubles, or take in the sense  
of that good which God intends by  
them. Affliction is a pill, which,  
being wrapt up in patience, and  
quiet submission, may be easily  
swallowed, but discontent chews the  
pill, and so imbitters the soul. God  
throws away some comfort, which  
he saw would hurt you, and you  
will throw away your peace after it.

9th Help. Lastly, if this will not  
do, but thy heart, like Rachel, still  
refuses to be comforted or quieted,  
then

then consider one thing more, which, if seriously pondered, will doubtless do this work ; and that is : Compare the condition thou art now in, and art so much dissatisfied with, with what condition others are, and thyself deserveest to be in : Others are roaring in flames, howling under the scourge of vengeance, and amongst them I deserve to be. Oh my soul ! is this hell ? is my condition as bad as the damned ? O what would thousands now in hell, give to change conditions with me ? It is a famous instance which Doctor Taylor gives us of the Duke of Conde : “ I have read, saith he, that when the Duke of Conde had entered voluntarily into the incommodities of a religious poverty, he was one day espied and pitied by a Lord of Italy, who out of tenderness wished him to be more careful and nutritive of his person : the good Duke answered, Sir, be not troubled ; and think not that I am ill provided of conveniences, for I send an harbinger before me, who makes ready my lodgings, and takes care that I may be royally entertained.

ed. The lord asked him who was his harbinger ? he answered, The knowledge of myself, and the consideration of what I deserve for my sins, which is eternal torments ; and when with this knowledge I arrive at my lodging, how unprovided forever I find it, methinks it is ever better than I deserve." Why doth the living man complain ? And thus the heart may be kept from desponding or repining under adversity.

3d Season. " The third season  
" calling for more than ordinary diligence to keep the heart, is in the  
" time of Sion's troubles ; when the  
" church, like the ship in which  
" Christ and his disciples were, is  
" oppressed and ready to perish in the  
" waves of persecution, then good  
" souls are ready to sink and be ship-  
" wrecked too upon the billows of  
" their own fear, I confess most men  
" rather need the spur, than the  
" reins in this case, and yet some  
" sit down as over weighed with  
" the sense of the church's troubles :  
" The loss of the ark cost old Eli  
" his life ; the sad posture Jerusa-  
" lem lay in, made good Nehemi-  
ah's

“ah’s countenance change in the  
“midst of all the pleasures and ac-  
“commodations of the court, Neh.  
“ii. 2 Ah this goes close to ho-  
“nest hearts.

“But though God allow, yea  
“command the most awakened ap-  
“prehensions of these calamities,  
“and in such a day call to mourning  
“and weeping, girding with sack-  
“cloth, Isa. xxii. 12. and severe-  
“ly threatens the insensible, Amos  
“6. 4. yet it will not please him to  
“see you sit like pensive Elijah un-  
“der the Juniper tree, “Ah Lord  
“God? it is enough, take away  
“my life also,” 1 Kings 19. 4. no,  
“mourners in Sion you may, and  
“ought to be, but self-tormentors  
“you must not be: complain to  
“God you may, but to complain  
“of God, though but by an unsui-  
“table carriage and the language of  
“your actions, you must not.”

3d Case. The third case that  
comes next to be spoken to is this :  
How public and tender hearts may  
be relieved and supported when they  
are even overweighed with the bur-  
densome sense of Sion’s troubles.

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I grant, it is hard for him that preferreth Sion to his chief joy, to keep his heart that it sink not below the due sense of its troubles ; and yet this ought and may be done by the use of such heart-establiſhing directions as theſe.

1<sup>ſt</sup> Direct. Settle this great truth in your hearts, that no trouble befalls Sion, but by the permission of Sion's God ; and he permits nothing out of which he will not bring much good at laſt to his people.

There is as truly a principle of quietneſs in the permitting as in the commanding will of God. See it in David, " Let him alone, it may be God hath bidden him," 2 Sam. xvi. 10. and in Chriſt : " Thou couldſt have no power againſt me except it were given thee from above," John xix. 11. It ſhould much calm our ſpirits, that it is the will of God to ſuffer it ; and had he not ſuffered it, it could never have been as it is.

This very conſideration quieted Job, Eli, David, and Hezekiah ; that the Lord did it, was enough to them : and why ſhould it not be ſo

to us ? if the Lord will have Sion ploughed as a field, and her goodly stones lie in the dust ; if it be his pleasure that Antichrist shall rage longer, and wear out the saints of the most High—if it be his will, that a day of trouble and treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord God of Hosts shall be upon the valley of vision ; that the wicked shall devour the man that is more righteous than he, what are we that we should contest with God ? Fit it is, that we should be resigned up to that will whence we proceeded ; and he that made us should dispose of us as he pleaseth. He may do what seemeth him good without our consent. Doth poor man stand upon equal ground, that he should capitulate with his Creator, or that God should render him an account of any of his matters ? It is every way as reasonable we be content however God dispose of us, as that we be obedient to whatsoever he commands us.

Well then, as Luther told Melancton, *desinat Philipus esse rector mundi*, so say I to you : Let infinite wisdom,

wisdom, power, and love alone, so by these all creatures are swayed, and actions guided, in reference to the church. It is none of our work to rule the world, but to submit to him that doth : *non cæco impetu voluntur rotæ*, the motions of Providence are all judicious, the wheels are full of eyes. It is enough that the affairs of Sion are in a good hand.

2d Direct. Ponder this heart-supporting truth, in reference to Sion's troubles, That how many troubles soever are upon her, yet her king is in her.

What ! hath the Lord forsaken his churches ? hath he sold them into the enemies hand ? doth he not regard what evil befalls them, that our hearts sink at this rate ? Is it not too shameful an undervaluing of the great God, and too much magnifying of poor impotent man, to fear and tremble at creatures, whilst God is in the midst of us ? The Church's enemies are many and mighty, let that be granted, yet, that argument with which Caleb and Joshua strove to raise their own hearts, is of as much force now as

it



was then: "The Lord is with us, fear them not," Numb. xiv. 9. The historian tells us, that when Antigonus over-heard his soldiers reckoning how many their enemies were, and so discouraging one another, he suddenly stepped in among them with this question, "And how many do you reckon me for?" Discouraged souls! how many do you reckon the Lord for? Is he not an over match for all his enemies? Is not one Almighty more than many mightys? Doth his presence stand for nothing among us? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 31. What think you was the reason of that great exploration Gideon made in Judges vi. He questions, ver. 12, 13. he desires a sign, ver. 17. and after that another, ver. 36. And what was the end of all this, but that he might be sure the Lord was with him, and that he might write his motto upon his ensign, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon?" So then, if you can be well assured, that the Lord is with his people, you will get thereby above all your discouragements.

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couragements. And that he is so, you need not of him desire a sign from heaven ; lo, you have a sign before you, even their marvellous preservation amidst all their enemies. If God be not with his people, how is it that they are not swallowed up quick ? Do their enemies want malice, power, or opportunity ? no, but there is an invisible hand upon them. Well then, as it is, *Exod. xxxiii. 14.* “ Let his presence give us rest.” And though the mountains be hurled into the sea, tho’ heaven and earth mingle together, fear not, God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.

3d. Direct. Ponder the great advantages attending the people of God in an afflicted condition. If a low and an afflicted state in the world be really best for the Church, then your dejections are not only irrational but ungrateful. Indeed, if ye estimate the happiness of the Church by its worldly ease, splendor and prosperity, then such times will seem bad for it ; but, if you reckon its glory to consist in humility, faith, patience,

patience, and heavenly mindedness, no condition in the world abounds with advantages for these as an afflicted condition doth. It was not persecutions and prisons, but worldliness and wantonness that was the poison of the Church ; neither was it the earthly glory of its professors, but the blood of its martyrs that was the seed of the church. The power of godliness did never thrive better than in affliction, and never ran lower than in times of greatest prosperity : When “ we are left a poor “ and an afflicted people, then we “ learn to trust in the name of the “ Lord,” Zeph. iii. 12. What say ye, sirs ? Is it indeed for the saints advantage to be weaned from the loaves and delights of ensnaring worldly vanities ; to be quickened and pricked forward with more haste to heaven ; to have clearer discoveries of their own hearts, to be taught to pray more fervently, frequently, spiritually ; to look and long for the rest to come more ardently ? If this be for their advantage, experience teaches us, that no condition is ordinarily blest with  
**such**

24      *... support in heart*  
such fruits as these, like an afflicted condition.

And is it well done then, to repine and droop because your Father consults more the advantage of your souls than the pleasing of your humours? because he will bring you a nearer way to heaven than you are willing to go? Is this a due requital of his love, who is pleased so much to concern himself in your welfare?

4<sup>th</sup> Direct. Take heed that you overlook not the many precious mercies which the people of God enjoy amidst all their trouble. It is a pity that our tears on account of our troubles should so blear and blind our eyes, that we should not see our mercies and grounds of comfort. I will not insist upon the mercy of having your lives given you for a prey, nor yet upon the many outward comforts, temporal conveniences and accommodations, which you enjoy even above what Christ and his precious servants, of whom the world was not worthy, ever had.

But what say you to pardon of  
sin,

sin, interest in Christ—the covenant of promises—and, an eternity of happiness in the presence of God after a few days are over? O that ever a people entitled to such mercies as these, should droop under any temporal affliction, or be so much concerned for the frowns of men, and loss of trifles! You have not the smiles of great men, but you have the favour of the great God. You are, it may be, cast back in your estates, but thereby further in your spirituals. You cannot live so bravely, plentifully, and easily as before, but still you may live as holy and heavenly as ever. Will you then grieve so much for these circumstantial, as to forget your substantial? Shall light troubles make you forget weighty mercies! Remember the Church's true riches are laid out of the reach of all its enemies: they may make you poor but not miserable. What though God do not distinguish in his outward dispensations betwixt his own and others; yea, what though his judgments single out the best, and spare the worst? though an Abel  
be

be killed in love, and a Cain survive in hatred, a bloody Dionysius die in his bed, and a good Josiah fall in battle? What though the belly of the wicked be filled with hid treasures, and the teeth of the saints be broken with gravel stones, yet still here is much matter of praise; for love hath distinguished, though common providence did not; and whilst prosperity and impurity slay the wicked, even slaying and adversity shall benefit and save the righteous.

5th Direct. Believe that how low soever the Church be plunged under the waters of adversity, it shall assuredly rise again. Fear not, for as sure as Christ arose the third day, notwithstanding the seal and watch that was upon him, so sure the Church shall arise out of all her troubles, and lift up her victorious head above all her enemies. There is no fear of ruining that people that thrive by their losses, and multiply by being diminished. O be not too quick to bury the Church before she be dead. Stay till Christ hath tried his skill before you give it up for lost.

ost. The bush may be all in a flame, but shall never be consumed, and that because of the good will of him that dwelleth in the bush.

Direct. 6. Record the famous instances of God's care and tenderness over his people in former straits. Christ hath not suffered it to be devoured yet : For above these 1700 years the Christian Church hath lived in affliction, and yet it is not consumed : many a wave of persecution hath gone over it, and yet it is not drowned : many designs to ruin it, and hitherto none hath prospered. This is not the first time that Hamans and Ahitophels have plotted its ruin ; that an Herod hath stretched out his hand to vex it. Still it hath been preserved from, supported under, or delivered out of all its troubles : And is it not as dear to God as ever ? Is not he as able to save it now as formerly ? Though we know not whence deliverance should arise, " Yet the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations," 2 Pet. ii. 9.

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Season. 4. " The fourth special  
" season for expressing our utmost  
" diligence in keeping our hearts is  
" the time of danger and public dis-  
" traction. In such times the best  
" hearts are but too apt to be sur-  
" prized by slavish fear, it is not  
" easy to secure the heart against  
" distraction in times of common  
" destruction. If Syria be confede-  
" rate with Ephraim, how doth the  
" hearts of the house of David shake,  
" even as the trees of the wood  
" which are shaken with the wind.  
" Isa. vii. 2. when there are ominous  
" signs in the heavens ; on the earth  
" distress of nations, with perplex-  
" ity ; the sea and waves roaring,  
" then the hearts of men fail for fear  
" and for looking after those things  
" which are coming on the earth,  
" Luke xxi. 25, 26. Even a Paul  
" himself may sometimes complain  
" of fightings within ; when there  
" are fears without, 2 Cor. vii. 5."

But, my brethren, these things  
ought not to be so : saints should be  
of a more raised spirit. So was Da-  
vid when his heart was kept in good  
frame : " The Lord is my light and  
" my



“ my salvation, whom shall I fear ?  
 “ the Lord is the strength of my life,  
 “ of whom shall I be afraid ? ” Psal.  
 “ xxvii. 1. Let none but the ser-  
 vants of sin be the slaves of fear :  
 let them that have delight in evil,  
 fear evil : *Impius tantum metuit,*  
*quantum nocuit.* O let not that  
 which God hath threatened as a  
 judgement upon the wicked, ever  
 seize upon the breasts of the righ-  
 teous : “ I will send,” saith God  
 “ faintness into their hearts in the  
 “ land of their enemies, and the  
 “ sound of a shaking leaf shall chase  
 “ them,” Lev. xxvi. 36. O what  
 poor spirited men were these, to  
 flee at a shaking leaf, which makes  
 a pleasant, and not a terrible noise,  
 and is in itself a kind of natural mu-  
 sic ! but to a guilty conscience, the  
 whistling leaves are drums and trum-  
 pets. “ But God hath not given us  
 “ the spirit of fear but of love, and  
 “ of a sound mind,” 2Tim. i. 7.  
 A sound mind, as it stands there in  
 opposition to the spirit of fear, is an  
 unwounded conscience, not infirm-  
 ed by guilt ; and this should make a  
 man as bold as a Lion. I know it

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cannot be said of a saint, what God  
spake of leviathan, that he is made  
without fear. There is a natural  
fear in every man, and it is as impos-  
sible to be wholly put off, as the  
body itself is. It is a perturbation  
of the mind, rising from the appre-  
hension of approaching danger:  
And as long as dangers can approach  
us, we shall find some perturbations  
within us. It is not my purpose to  
commend to you a Stoical apathy;  
nor yet to take you off from such a  
degree of cautional preventive fear  
as may fit you for troubles, and be  
serviceable to your souls. There is  
a provident fear that opens our eyes  
to foresee danger, and quickens to a  
prudent and lawful use of means to  
prevent it. Such was Jacob's fear,  
Gen. xxxii. 7, 9, 10. &c. but it is  
the fear of diffidence. I persuade  
you to keep your hearts from that  
tyrannical passion which invades the  
heart in time of danger; distracts,  
weakens, and unfits the heart for du-  
ty, drives men upon unlawful means,  
and brings a snare with it. Well  
then, the fourth case will be this.

Case 4. How a christian may keep  
his

his heart from distracting and tormenting fears in times of great and threatening dangers.

Now there are fourteen excellent rules or helps for the keeping of the heart from sinful fear, when imminent dangers threaten us : and the first is this.

Rule 1. Look upon all the creatures as in the hand of God, who manages them in all their motions ; limiting, restraining, and determining them all at his pleasure.

Get this truth well settled by faith in your hearts ; it will marvelously guard them against slavish fears. The first of Ezekiel contains an admirable scheme or draught of providence : there you may see the living creatures who move the wheels, viz. the great affairs and turnings of things here below, coming unto Christ, who sits upon the throne, to receive new orders and instructions from him, ver. 24, 25. 26. And in Rev. vi. you read of white, black, and red horses, which are nothing else but the instruments which God employs in executing his judgements in the world,

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world, as wars, pestilence and death. But when these horses are prancing and trampling up and down the world, here is that may quiet our hearts, That God hath the reins in his hand. Wicked men are sometimes like mad horses; they would stamp the people of God under their feet, but that the bridle of Providence is in their lips, Job i. 11, 12. A lion at liberty is terrible to meet, but who is afraid of the lion in the keeper's hand.

Rule 2. Remember that this God, in whose hand all the creatures are, is your Father; and is much more tender over you, than you are or "can be over yourselves: "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye," Zech. ii. 8.

Let me ask the most timorous woman, whether there be not a vast difference betwixt the sight of a drawn sword in the hand of a bloody ruffian, and the same sword in the hand of her own tender husband? As great a difference there is in looking upon creatures by an eye of sense, and looking on them as in the hand of your God by an eye

eye of faith : That is a sweet scripture to this purpose, " Thy Maker " is thine Husband, the Lord of " hosts is his name." He is the Lord of the hosts of creatures in the world. Who would be afraid to pass through an army, though all the soldiers should turn their swords and guns towards him, if the general of that army were his friend or father ; I have met with an excellent story of a religious young man, who being at sea with many other passengers in a great storm, and they being half dead with fear, he only was observed to be very chearful, as if he had been but little concerned in that danger ; one of them demanding the reason of his chearfulness, " Oh," said he, " it is because the " pilot of the ship is my father." Consider Christ, first as the king and supreme Lord over the providential kingdom, and then as your head, husband and friend, and wilt quickly say, " Return unto thy rest O my soul." This truth will make you cease trembling, and fall a singing in the midst of dangers : " The " Lord is king of all the earth, sing

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ye praise with understanding,  
Psal. xlvii. 7. or as the Hebrew is  
“ Every one that hath understand  
“ ing is,” viz. of this heart-revi-  
ving and establishing Doctrine of the  
dominion of our Father over all the  
creatures.

Rule 3. Urge upon your heart  
the exprefs prohibition of Christ in  
this case; and let your hearts stand  
in awe of the violations of them.

He hath charged you not to fear  
“ When ye shall hear of wars and  
“ commotions, see that ye be not  
terrified.” Luke xxi. 9, and “ In  
“ nothing be terrified by your ad-  
versaries,” Phil. i. 28. yea in Matth.  
x. 26, 8, 31. and within the com-  
pass of six verses, our Saviour com-  
mands us thrice “ not to fear man.”  
Doth every big word of proud dust  
and ashes make thee afraid? doth  
the voice of a man make thee trem-  
ble? and shall not the voice of God?  
If thou art of such a fearful and ti-  
morous spirit, how is it that thou  
fearest not to disobey the flat com-  
mand of Jesus Christ? Methinks  
the command of Christ should have  
as much power to calm, as the voice

of a poor worm to terrify thy heart :  
“ Even I am he that comforteth  
“ you, who art thou that thou  
“ shouldest be afraid of a man that  
“ shall die ? and of the son of man  
“ that shall be made as the grass,  
“ and forgettest the Lord thy Ma-  
“ ker ?” Isa. li. 12, 13. We can-  
not fear creatures sinfully, till we  
have forgotten God : did we remem-  
ber what he is and what he hath  
said, we should not be of such fee-  
ble spirits. Bring thy heart then to  
this Dilemma in times of danger :  
If I let, into my heart the slavish  
fear of man, I must let out the re-  
verential awe and fear of God ; and  
dare I cast off the fear of the Al-  
mighty for the frowns of a man ?  
Shall I lift up proud dust above the  
great God ? shall I run upon a cer-  
tain sin to shun a probable danger ?  
Oh keep thy heart by that conside-  
ration !

Rule 4. Remember how much  
needless trouble your vain fears have  
brought upon you formerly, and  
how you have disquieted yourselves  
to no purpose : “ And hast feared  
“ continually because of the oppres-  
“ sion, as if he were ready to de-

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“your : and where is the fury of the oppressor ?” Isa. li. 13.

He seemed ready to devour but yet you are not devoured ; I have not brought upon you the thing that you feared ; you have wasted your spirits, disordered your souls, and weakened your hands, and all this to no purpose. You might have all this while enjoyed your peace, and possessed your souls in patience. And here I cannot but observe a very deep policy of Satan managing a design against the soul by these vain fears. I call them vain in regard of the frustration of them by providence, but certainly they are not in vain as to the end Satan aims at in raising them : for herein he acts as soldiers do in the siege of a garrison, who on purpose to wear out the besiged by constant watchings, and thereby unfit them to make resistance when they storm it in earnest, do every night give them false alarms, which though they come to nothing yet do notably serve this further design of the enemy. O when will you beware of Satan's device !

Rule 5. Consider solemnly, That  
though



*Fears.*  
though the things you fear should  
really fall out, yet, there is more  
evil in your own fear than in the  
thing feared.

And that not only as the least evil  
of sin is worse than the greatest evil  
of suffering; but as this sinful fear  
hath really more torment and trouble  
in it than is in that condition  
you are so much afraid of, fear is  
both a multiplying and a torment-  
ing passion; it represents troubles  
much greater than they are, and so  
tortures and wracks the soul much  
worse than when the suffering it-  
self comes. So it was with Israel  
at the Red-sea, they cried out, and  
were sore afraid till they put foot  
into the water, and then a passage  
was opened through those waters  
which they thought would have  
drowned them. Thus it is with us:  
we looking through the glass of a  
carnal fear, upon the waters of trouble,  
the swellings of Jordan, cry  
out, Oh they are unfordable? we  
must needs perish in them! But  
when we come into the midst of  
those floods indeed, we find the  
promise made good: "God will

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“make a way to escape,” 1 Cor. x. 13. Thus it was with blessed Bilney when he would make a trial by putting his finger to the candle, and not able to endure that, he cried out, What, cannot I bear the burning of a finger ; How then shall I be able to bear the burning of my whole body to morrow ! and yet when that morrow came, he could go chearfully into the flames with that scripture in his mouth, “Fear not, for I have redeemed thee ; “I have called thee by thy name, “thou art mine ; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt,” Isa. xliii. 1, 2, 3.

Rule 6. Consult the many precious promises which are written for your support and comfort in all dangers.

These are your refuges to which you may fly and be safe, when the arrows of danger fly by night, and destruction wasteth at noon day. There are particular promises suited to particular cases and exigencies, and there are general promises reaching

*in Times of common Distraction.* 109  
ing all cases and conditions. Such  
are these : “ All things shall work  
together for good &c.” Rom. viii.  
28. and “ Though a sinner do evil  
“ an hundred times, and his days  
“ be prolonged, yet it shall be well  
“ with them that fear the Lord,  
&c.” Eccles. viii. 12. “ Could you  
“ but believe the promises, your  
“ hearts should be established,”  
2 Chron. x. 29. Could you but  
plead them with God, as Jacob did :  
“ Thou saidst I will surely do  
“ thee good, &c.” Gen. xxxii. 12.  
They would relieve you in every  
distress.

Object. But that promise was made personally and by name to him, so are not these to me.

Answer. If Jacob's God be your God, you have as good an interest in them as he had. The Church a thousand years after that transaction betwixt God and Jacob, applied that which God spake to him, as if it had been spoken to themselves "He found him in Bethel, and "there he spake with us," Hos. xii 4.

**Rule 7. Quiet your trembling hearts**

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hearts by recording and consulting your past experiences of the care and faithfulness of God in former distresses.

These experiences are food for your faith in a wilderness condition, Psal. lxxiv. 14. By this David kept his heart in time of danger, 1 Sam. xvii. 37. and Paul his, 2 Cor. i. 10. It was sweetly answered by Silentarius, when one told him, that his enemies waylaid him to take away his life : *Si Deus mei curam non habet, quid vivo ?* " If God take no care of me, how " have I escaped hitherto ?" You may plead with God old experiences to procure new ones ; for it is in pleading with God for new deliverances, as it is in pleading for new pardons. Now, mark how Moses pleads on that account with God : " Pardon, I beseech thee, " the iniquity of this people, as " thou hast forgiven them from E- " gypt until now," Numb. xiv. 19. He doth not say as men do, Lord this is the first fault ; thou has not been troubled before to sign their pardon ; but Lord because thou **hast**

thou hast pardoned them so often, pardon them once again. So, is it also in new straits, Lord thou hast often heard, helped and saved in former fears, therefore now help again, for with thee there is plenteous redemption, and thine arm is not shortened.

Rule 8. Be well satisfied that you are in the way of your duty, and that will beget holy courage in times of danger.

Who will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good? 1 Pet. iii. 13. Or, if any dare attempt it, you may boldly commit yourselves to God in well doing," 1 Pet. iv. 19. It was this consideration that raised Luther's spirit above all fear: "In the cause of God, I ever am, and ever shall be stout: herein I assume this title *Cedo nulli*: A good cause will bear up a man's spirit bravely" Hear the saying of a heathen to the shame of cowardly Christians: When the emperor Vespasian had commanded Fluidius Priscus not to come to the senate, or, if he did, to speak nothing but what he would have him; the

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the senator returned this noble answer : That as he was a senator, it was fit he should be at the senate ; and if being there, he were required to give his advice, he would speak freely that which his conscience commanded him. The emperor threatening that then he should die, he answered, “ Did I  
“ ever tell you that I was immortal  
“ Do you what you will, and I  
“ will do what I ought : it is in  
“ your power to put me to death  
“ unjustly, and in me to die con-  
“ stantly.”

Righteousness is a breast-plate ; the cause of God will pay all your expences. Let them tremble whom danger finds out of the way of duty.

Rule 9. Get your consciences sprinkled with the blood of Christ from all guilt ; and that will set your hearts above all fear.

It is guilt upon the conscience that softens and cowardizes our spirits : “ The righteous is bold as a lion,” Prov. xxviii. 1. It was guilt in Cain’s conscience that made him cry, “ Every one that meets me  
“ will slay me,” Gen. iv. 14. A

guilty

guilty conscience is more terrified with conceited dangers, than a pure conscience is with real ones. A guilty sinner carries a witness against himself in his own bosom. It was guilty Herod cried out, "John Baptist is risen from the dead." Such a conscience is the devil's anvil, on which he fabricates all those swords and spears, with which the guilty sinner pierces and wounds himself. Guilt is to danger, what fire is to gun powder : a man need not fear to walk among many barrels of powder, if he have no fire about him.

Rule 10. Exercise holy trust in times of greatest distress.

Make it your business to trust God with your lives and comforts, and then your hearts will be at rest about them. So did David : " At what time I am afraid I will trust in thee," Psal. lvij. 3. *q. d.* Lord, if at any time a storm rise, I will make bold to shelter from it under the covert of thy wings. Go to God by acts of faith and trust, and never doubt but he will secure you : " Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace

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“peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.” Isa. lxii. 3. God takes it well when thou comest to him thus: Father, my life, my liberty, or estate are hunted after, and I cannot secure them; O, let me leave them in thy hand: “The poor leaveth himself with thee,” and, doth his God fail him? No, “Thou art the helper of the Fatherless,” Psal. x. 14. that is, Thou art the helper of the destitute one, that hath none to go to but God. And that is a sweet scripture. “He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord,” Psal. cxii. 7. He doth not say his ear shall be privileged from the report of evil tidings: he may hear as sad tidings as other men, but his heart shall be privileged from the terror of those tidings: “His heart is fixed.”

**Rule 11.** Consult the honour of religion more, and your personal safety less.

Is it for the honour of religion, think you, that Christians should be as timorous as hares, to start at every



found? Will not this tempt the world to think, that whatever you talk, yet your principles are no better than other mens? Oh what mischief may the discoveries of your fears before them do? It was a noble saying of Nehemiah, chap. vi. 11. "Should such a man as I flee? and who being as I am should flee? Were it not better you should die, than that the world should be prejudiced against Christ by your example? for alas! how apt is the world, (who judge more by what they see in your practices, than what they understand of your principles,) to conclude from your timorousness, that how much soever you commend faith, and talk of assurance, yet you dare trust to these things no more than they, when it comes to the trial. O let not your fears lay such a stumbling block before the blind world!

Rule 12. He that will secure his heart from fear, must first secure the eternal interest of his soul in the hands of Jesus Christ.

When this is done, then you may say, Now world do thy worst. You will

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will not be very solicitous about a vile body, when you are once assured it shall be well to all eternity with your precious souls. "Fear not them," saith Christ, "than can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." The assured Christian may smile with contempt upon all his enemies, and say, Is this the worst that you can do? What say you Christians? Are you assured that your souls are safe; that within a few moments of your dissolution they shall be received by Christ into everlasting habitations? Well, if you be sure of that, never trouble your selves about the instruments and means of your dissolution.

Object O, but a violent death is terrible to nature!

Ans. But what matter is it, when thy soul is in heaven, whether it were let out at thy mouth or at thy throat? whether thy familiar friends or barbarous enemies stand about thy dead body and close thine eyes? Alas, it is not worth the making so much ado about: *Nihil corpus sentit in nervo, cum anima*

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about in *cælo*: "thy soul shall not be  
sensible in heaven, how thy body  
is used on earth:" no, it shall be  
"swallowed up in life."

Rule 13. Learn to quench all fla-  
sh creature fears in the reveren-  
The al fear of God.

This is a cure by diversion. It is  
a rare piece of christian wisdom to  
turn those passions of the soul which  
most predominate into spiritual  
channels, to turn natural anger into  
spiritual zeal, natural mirth into  
holy chearfulness, and natural fear  
into an holy dread and awe of God.

This method of cure Christ pre-  
scribes in that forementioned place,  
Mat. x. like to which is that in Isa.  
viii. 12, 13. "Fear not their fear."

But how shall we help it? Why

"Sanctify the Lord of hosts him-

self, and let him be your fear and

"your dread." Natural fear may

be allayed for present by natural rea-

son, or the removal of the occasi-

on, but then it is but like a candle

blown out with a puff of breath,

which is easily blown in again; but

if the fear of God extinguish it, then

it is like a candle quenched in wa-

ter

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ter, which cannot easily be rekindled.

Rule. 14. Lastly Pour out those tears to God in prayer, which the Devil and your own unbelief, pour in upon you in times of danger.

Prayer is the best out let to fear: Where is the Christian that cannot set his *probatum est* to this direction? I will give you the greatest example in the world to encourage you in the use of it, even the example of Jesus Christ, Mark 14. 32. When the hour of his danger and death drew nigh, he gets into the garden, separates from the disciples, and there wrestles mightily with God in prayer, even unto an agony. In reference to which the apostle saith, "Who in the days of his flesh, "when he had offered up prayers "and supplications, with strong "cries and tears, to him that was "able to save him from death, and "was heard in that he feared, Heb. "v. 7." He was heard as to strength and support to carry him through it, though not as to deliverance, or exemption from it.

Now, Oh that these things might abide

bide with you, and be reduced to practice in these evil days, that many trembling souls may be established by them.

Seaf. 5. "The fifth season to excite this diligence in keeping the heart, is the time of straits and outward pinching wants; although at such times we should complain to God, and not of God (the throne of grace being erected for a time of need, Heb. iv. 16.) yet when the waters of relief run low, and wants begin to pinch hard, how prone are the best hearts to disturb the fountain! When the meal in the barrel, and oil in the cruse are almost spent, our faith and patience are almost spent too. Now it is difficult to keep down the proud and unbelieving heart in an holy quietude and sweet submission at the foot of God. 'Tis an easy thing to talk of trusting God for daily bread while we have a full barn or purse: but to say as the prophet, Though the fig tree should not blossom, neither fruit be in the vine, &c. yet will I rejoice in  
"the

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“the Lord. Hab. iii 17.”—Sure this  
“is not easy. The first case there-  
fore shall be this.

Case 5: How a Christian may  
keep his heart from distrusting God,  
or repining against him when out-  
ward wants are either felt or fear-  
ed.

This case deserves to be seriously  
pondered, and especially to be stu-  
died now ; since it seems to be the  
design of Providence to empty the  
people of God, of their creature  
fullness, and acquaint them with  
those straits which hitherto they  
have been altogether strangers to.

Now, to secure the heart from  
the fore-mentioned danger attending  
this condition, these following con-  
siderations, through the blessing of  
the Spirit may prove effectual.  
And the first is this.:

1. Confid. That if God reduce  
you to straits and necessities, yet he  
deals no otherwise therein with you,  
than he hath done with some of the  
choicest and holiest men that ever  
lived.

Your condition is not singular,  
tho' you have hitherto been stran-  
ger

ers to wants, other saints have daily conversed and been familiarly acquainted with them. Hear what blessed Paul speaks, not of himself only, but in the name of other saints reduced to the like exigency: "Even to this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place." 1 Cor. iv. 11. To see such a man going up and down the world with a naked back and empty belly, and not a house to put his head in, one that was so far above thee in grace and holiness; one that did more service for God in a day, than perhaps thou hast done him all thy days; and yet thou repine as if hardly dealt with! Have you forgot what necessities and straits even a David hath suffered? How great were his straits and necessities: "Give, I pray thee, (saith he to Nabal) whatsoever cometh to thy servants, and to thy son David" 1 Sam. xxv.

8. Renowned Musculus was forced to dig in the town ditch for a maintainance. Famous Ainsworth, (as I have been credibly informed)

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was

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was forced to sell the bed he lay on  
to buy him bread. But what speak  
I of these : behold a greater than  
any of them, even the Son of God  
“ who is the heir of all things, and  
by whom the worlds were made,”  
yet sometime would have been glad  
of any thing, having nothing to eat:  
“ And on the morrow when they  
were come from Bethany, he was  
hungry and seeing a fig tree afar off,  
having leaves, he came, if haply  
he might find [any thing] thereon.”  
Mark xi. 12

Well, then, hereby God hath  
set no mark of hatred upon you;  
neither can you infer the want of  
love from the want of bread.  
When thy repining heart puts the  
question, Was there ever any sor-  
row like unto mine ? Ask these wor-  
thies, and they will tell thee, that  
they did not complain and fret as  
thou dost, yet they were driven to  
as great straits as thou art.

Confid. 2. If God leave you not  
in this necessitous condition without  
a promise, you have no reason to  
repine or despond under it.

This is a sad condition indeed, to  
which



which no promise belongs, I remember Mr Calvin upon these words, Isa. ix. 1. "Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation," &c. solves the doubt, in what sense the darkness of the captivity was not so great, as the lesser incursions made by Tiglath Pileser. In the captivity the city was destroyed, and the temple burnt with fire, there was no comparison in the affliction; but yet the darkness should not be such, and the reason (saith he) is this, *huic certam promissionem esse ad-  
ditam, cum in prioribus nulla esset,* (i. e.) there was a certain promise made to this, but none to the other.

'Tis better to be as low as hell with a promise, than in paradise without one. Even the darkness of hell itself would be comparatively no darkness at all, were there but a promise to enlighten it. Now God hath left many sweet promises for the faith of his poor people to feed on in this condition, such are these: "O fear the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear him; the lions do lack and

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suffer hunger, but they that fear the  
Lord shall want nothing that is  
good." Psal. xxxiv. 9, 10. "The  
eye of the Lord is upon the righteous  
to keep them alive in famine."  
Psal. xlviii. 18, 16. "No good  
thing will he withhold from them  
that walk uprightly." Psal. xlviii.  
11. "He that spared not his own  
Son, but delivered him up to the  
death for us all, how shall he not  
with him also freely give us all  
things?" Rom. viii. 32. "When  
the poor and needy seek water,  
and there is none, and their tongue  
faileth for thirst, I the Lord will  
hear them, I the God of Israel will  
not forsake them." Isa. xli. 17.  
Here you see, first their extreme  
wants, water being put even for the  
necessaries of life, (2.) their certain  
relief, "I the Lord will hear them,  
in which it is supposed, that they  
cry unto him in their straits, and  
he hears their cry.

Having therefore these promises,  
Why should not your mistrustful  
hearts conclude like David's, "The  
Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not  
want. Psal. xxiii. 1.

Object

Object. But these promises imply conditions; if they were absolute, they would afford more satisfaction,

Sol. What are those tacit conditions you speak of, but these? 1. That either he will supply or sanctify your wants. 2. That you shall have so much as God sees fit for you, and doth this trouble you? Would you have the mercy whether sanctified or no? Whether God sees it fit for you or no? Methinks the appetites of saints after earthly things should not be so ravenous, to seize greedily upon any enjoyment, nor caring how they have it.

But, oh! when wants pinch, and we see not whence supplies should come, then our faith in the promise shakes, and we, like murmuring Israel, cry, "He gave bread, can he give water also?" O unbelieving hearts! when did his promises fail? Who ever trusted them, and was ashamed? May not God upbraid thee with thine unreasonable infidelity, as Jer. ii. 31. "Have I been a wilderness unto you," &c. or as Christ said to the disciples, Since I was with you, lacked you any

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thing?" Yea, may you not up-  
braid yourselves, may you not say  
with good old Policarp, "Thou  
many years I have served Christ  
and found him a good master." In-  
deed he may deny what your wan-  
tonness, but not what your real  
wants call for: he will not regard  
the cry of your lusts, nor yet despise  
the cry of your faith; tho' he will  
not indulge and humour your wan-  
ton appetites, yet he will not vio-  
late his own faithful promises. These  
promises are your best security for  
eternal life, and 'tis strange if they  
should not satisfy you for daily bread:  
Remember ye the words of the Lord,  
and solace your hearts with them  
amidst all your wants. 'Tis said of  
Epicurus, that, in the dreadful fit  
of the colic, he often refreshed him-  
self, *ob memoriam inventorum*, by  
calling to mind his inventions in phi-  
losophy; and of Possidonius the  
philosopher, that in a great fit of  
the stone, he solaced himself with  
discourses of moral virtue; and  
when the pain twinged him, he  
would say, *nihil agis dolor quamvis  
his molestis nunquam, confitebor te esse  
malum*: "Oh pain, thou dost no-  
thing

thing; though thou art a little troublesome, I will never confess thee to be evil." If, upon such grounds as these, they could support themselves under such grinding and rack-  
ing pains, and even delude their diseases by them; how much rather should the precious promises of God, and the sweet experiences which have gone along step by step with them, make you to forget all your wants, and comfort you over every strait!

Confid. 3. If it be bad now, it might have been worse; hath God denied thee the comforts of this life; he might have denied thee Christ, peace and pardon also, and then thy case had been woeful indeed. But though you be poor in this world, "yet you may be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised. James ii. 5." O learn to set spiritual riches over against temporal poverty. Balance all your present troubles with your spiritual privileges. Indeed, if God had denied your souls the robes of righteousness to clothe them, the hidden manna to feed them; the

F 4

heavenly

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heavenly mansions to receive them,  
if your-souls were left destitute, as  
well as your bodies, you might well  
be pensive ; but this consideration  
hath enough to bring the consider-  
ing soul to rest under any outward  
strait. 'Twas bravely said by Lu-  
ther, when want began to pinch  
him, Let us be contented with our  
hard fare, (saith he) for do not we  
feast with angels upon Christ the  
bread of life : And “ blessed be God  
(saith Paul) who hath abounded to  
us in all spiritual blessings, Eph. i.  
3.”

Confid. 4. This affliction, though  
great, is not such an affliction but  
God hath far greater, with which  
he chastises the dearly beloved of  
his soul in this world, and should he  
remove this, and inflict those, you  
would account your present state a  
very comfortable state, and bless God  
to be as now you are.

What think you, sirs ? should  
God remove your outward wants,  
give you the desire of your hearts  
in creature-comforts, but hide his  
face from you, shoot his arrows in-  
to your souls, and cause the venom

of them to drink up your spirits? Should he leave you but a few days to the buffeting of Satan and his blasphemous injections; should he hold your eyes but a few nights awaking with the horrors of conscience, tossing to and fro till the dawning of the day; should he lead you through the chambers of death, shew you the visions of darkness, and make his terrors set themselves in array against you, then tell me if you would not count it a choice mercy to be back again in your former necessitous condition, with peace of conscience, and count bread and water with God's favour, a happy state? O then I take heed of repining. Say not, God deals hardly with you, lest you provoke him to convince you by your own sense and feeling, that he hath worse rods than these for unsubmissive and forward children.

Confid. 5. If it be bad now, it will be better shortly.

O keep thy heart by that consideration! The meal in the barrel is almost spent: Well, be it so, why should that trouble me if I am al-

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most beyond the need and use of all these things. The traveller hath all his money, but a shilling or two left : Well, (saith he) though my money be almost spent, yet my journey is almost finished too ; I am near home and then shall be fully supplied. If there be no candles in the house, yet 'tis a comfort to think that it is almost day, and then there will be no need of candles ; I am afraid, Christian, thou mis-reckonest thyself, when thou thinkest my provision is almost spent, and I have a great way to travel, many years to live, and nothing to live upon, it may not be half so many as thou supposest ; in this be confident, if thy provision be spent, either fresh supplies are coming (though thou seest not from whence) or thou art nearer thy journey's end than thou reckonest thyself to be. Desponding soul doth it become a man or woman travelling upon the road to that heavenly city, and almost arrived there, within a few days journey of his father's house, where all his wants shall be supplied, to talk on thus about a little meat, drink, or cloathes, which  
be



he fears, he shall want by the way?

Object. 1. But I may die for want.

Sol. 1. Who ever did so? Where were the righteous forsaken? 2. If so your journey is ended, and you fully supplied.

Object. 2. But I am not sure of that, were I sure of heaven, it were another matter.

Sol. Are you not sure of that? then you have other matters to trouble yourselves about than these. Methinks, this should be the least of all your cares; I do not find that souls perplexed and troubled about the want of Christ, pardon of sin, &c. are usually very anxious or solicitous about these things—He that seriously puts such questions as these, What shall I do to be saved? How shall I know my sin is pardoned? doth not usually trouble himself with what shall I eat, what shall I drink, or wherewithal shall I be cloathed?

Confid. 6 Doth it become the children of such a Father to distrust his all sufficiency, or repine against any of his dispensations?

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Do you well to question his care and love upon every new exigence, say, have you not been ashamed of this formerly? Hath not your Father's seasonable provisions for you in former straits put you to the blush? and made you resolve, never to question his love and care any more, and yet will you renew your unworthy suspicions of him again? Dis-ingenuous child, reason with thyself, if I perish for want of what is good and needful for me, it must either be because my Father knows not my wants, or hath not whethewith to supply them; or else regards not what becomes of me. Which of these shall I charge upon him? Not the first, for "My Father knows what I have need of," Mark vi. 32, my condition is not hid from him: Nor the second, "For the earth is the Lord's and the fulness of it," Psalm xxiv. 1. His name is "God all sufficient," Gen. xvii. 1. Not the last, "For, as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him," Psal. ciii. 13. "The Lord is ex-

ceding

ceeding pitiful and of tender mercy,"

Jam. v. 11. "He hears the young ravens when they cry," Job xxxviii.

41. and will he not hear me? Con-

sider (saith Christ) the fowls of the

air," Math. vi. 26. Not the fowls

at the door, that are every day fed

by hand, but the fowls of the air,

that have none to provide for them.

Doth he feed and clothe his ene-

mies, and will he forget his chil-

dren? "He heard the very cry of

Ishmael in distress," Gen. xxi. 17.

O my unbelieving heart! Dost thou

yet doubt? Remember Hagar and

the child.

Confid. 7. Your poverty is not

your sin, but your affliction only:

If by sinful means you have not

brought it upon yourselves; and if

it be but an affliction, it may be

born the easier for that.

It is hard indeed to bear an afflic-

tion coming upon us as the fruit and

punishment of sin; when men are

under trouble upon that account,

they use to say, O! if it were but a

single affliction coming from the

hand of God, by way of trial, I

could

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could bear it, but I have brought it upon myself by sin, it comes as the punishment of sin, the marks of God's displeasure are upon it; it is the guilt within that troubles and galls, more than the want without.

But it is not so here, and therefore you have no reason to be cast down under it.

Object. 1. But though there be no sting of guilt, yet this condition wants not other stings; as first the discredit of religion, I cannot comply with mine engagements in the world, and thereby religion is like to suffer.

Sol. It is well you have an heart to discharge every duty; yet if God disable you by providence, it is no discredit to your profession, because you do not that which you cannot do, so long as it is your desire and endeavour to do what you can and ought to do, and in this case, God's will is, "that lenity and forbearance be exercised towards you," Deut. xxiv. 12. 13.

Object. 2. But it grieves me to behold the necessities of others whom I was wont to relieve and refresh.

fresh, but now cannot.

Sol. If you cannot, it ceases to be your duty, and God accepts the drawing out of your soul to the hungry in compassion and desire to help them, though you cannot draw forth a full purse to relieve and supply them.

Obiect. 3. But I find such a condition full of temptation, a sore clog in the way to heaven.

Sol. Every condition in the world hath its clogs, and attending temptations; and were you in a prosperous condition, you might there meet with more temptations and fewer advantages than you now have, for though I confess poverty hath its temptations as well as prosperity, yet I am confident, prosperity hath not those excellent advantages that poverty hath; for here you have an opportunity to discover the sincerity of your love to God, when you can live upon him, find enough in him, and constantly follow him, even when all external inducements and motives fail. And thus I have shewed you how to keep your hearts from the temptations and dangers attending

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tending a poor and low condition  
in the world, when want pinches,  
and the heart begins to sink, then  
improve and bless God for these  
helps to keep it.

Season 6. "The sixth season of  
expressing this diligence in keeping  
the heart, is the season of duty;  
when we draw nigh to God in pub-  
lic, private, or secret duties, then  
'tis time to look to the heart; for  
the vanity of the heart seldom disco-  
vers itself more than at such times.  
How oft doth the poor soul cry out,  
O Lord how fain would I serve thee  
but vain thoughts will not let me;  
I came to open my heart to thee,  
to delight my soul in communion  
with thee, but my corruptions have  
set upon me: Lord, rate off these  
vain thoughts, and suffer them not  
to prostitute the soul, which is es-  
poused to thee before thy face. The  
sixth case then is this:"

Case 6. How the heart may be  
kept from distractions by vain  
thoughts in the time of duty.

There is a twofold distraction  
or wandering of the heart in duty  
1. voluntarily and habitual, "They

set not their hearts aright, and their spirit was not steadfast with God." Psal. lxxviii. 8. This is the case of formalists, and it proceeds from the want of an holy bent, and inclination of the heart to God; their hearts are under the power of their lusts, and therefore it is no wonder that they go after their lusts, even when they are about holy things," Ezek. xxxiii. 3. 2 Involuntary and lamented distractions, "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me, O wretched man that I am, &c." Rom. vii. 21. 24. This proceeds not from the want of a holy bent and aim, but from the weakness and imperfection of grace. And in this case the soul may make the like complaint against its own corruptions that Abijah did against Jeroboam, "Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat is risen up against his Lord, when Rehoboam was young and tender hearted, and could not withstand them, and there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial." 2 Chron. xiii. 6. 7. Grace hath a dominion, but lusts are mu-  
tinous

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tinous and seditious, during the infancy thereof. But it is not my business to shew you how these distractions come into the heart, but rather how to get, and keep them out of the heart ; in order whereto, take these ten following helps.

Help 1. Sequester yourselves from all earthly employments, and set apart some time for solemn preparation, to meet God in duty : You cannot come reeking hot out of the world into God's presence, but you will find a tang of it in your duties ; it is with the heart a few minutes since plunged in the world, now at the feet of God, just as with the sea after a storm, which still continues working, muddy, and disquiet, though the wind be laid and storm be over ; thy heart must have some time to settle. There are few musicians that can take down a lute or viol, and play presently upon it, without some time to tune it ; there are few christians can presently say, as Psal. lvii 7. " O God, my heart is fixed, it is fixed." O when thou goest to God in any duty, take thy heart aside, and say,



my soul ! I am now addressing myself to the greatest work that ever a creature was employed about : I am going into the awful presence of God about business of everlasting moment.

Oh my soul ! leave trifling now, be composed, watchful and serious, this is no common work, it is God-work, soul work, eternity work ; I am now going forth bearing seed which will bring forth fruit to life or death in the world to come ; pause a while upon thy sins, wants, and troubles ; keep thy thoughts a while in these before thou address thyself to duty. David first mused, and then spake with his tongue, Psal. xxxix. 3,- 4. So Psal. xlv. 1. My heart is ending, &c.

Help 2. Having composed thy heart by previous meditation, presently set a guard upon thy senses : how often are poor Christians in danger of losing the eyes of their mind by those of their body ; for this reason Job covenanted with his senses, Chap. xxxi. 1. for this David prayed, Psal. cxix. 37. turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way

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way this may serve to expound that  
mytical Arabian proverb, which  
advises to shut the windows, that the  
house may be light : it were ex-  
cellent if you could say in your on-  
sets upon duty, as an holy one once  
did when he came off from duty,  
&c. *Claudimini, oculi mei, claudi-*  
*mini, &c.* Be shut, O my eyes, be  
shut, for it is impossible you should  
ever see such beauty and glory in  
any creature, as I have now seen  
in God. You had need avoid all  
occasions of distraction from with-  
out, for be sure you will meet enough  
from within ; intention of spirit in  
the work of God locks up the eye  
and ear against vanity. When Mar-  
cellus entered the gates of Syracuse,  
Archimedes was so intent about his  
mathematical scheme, that he took  
no notice of the soldiers when they  
entered his very study with drawn  
swords ; a fervent cannot be a va-  
grant heart.

Help 3. Beg of God a mortified  
fancy. A working fancy, (saith  
one) how much soever it be extol-  
led among men, is a great snare to  
the soul ; except it work in fellow-  
ship

ship with right reason, and a sanctified heart: The phantasy is a power of the soul placed between the senses and the understanding; it is that which first stirs itself in the soul, and by its motions the other powers are stirred; it is the common shop where thoughts are first forged and framed, and as this is, so are they: if imaginations be not first cast down, it is impossible that every thought of the heart should be brought into obedience to Christ, 2 Cor. x. 5. This fancy is naturally the wildest and most untameable power in the soul. Some Christians (especially such as are of hot and dry constitutions) have much to do with it.

And truly, the more spiritual the heart is, the more it is troubled about the vanity and wildness of it. O what a sad thing it is! that thy nobler soul must lacky up and down after a vain roving fancy; that such a beggar should ride on horseback, and such a prince run after it on foot, that it should call off the soul from attendance upon God, when it is most sweetly engaged in communion with

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with him, to prosecute such vanities as it will start at such times before it; beg earnestly of God that the power of sanctification may one day come upon it. Some Christians have attained such a degree of sanctification of their fancies, that they have had much sweetness left upon their hearts by the spiritual workings of it in the night season: when thy fancy is mortified, thy thoughts will be more orderly and fixed.

Help. 4. If thou wouldst keep thy heart from those vain excursions, realize to thyself by faith, the holy and awful presence of God in duties.

If the presence of a grave man will compose us to a seriousness, how much more the presence of an holy God? thinkest thou, thy soul durst be so garish and light, if the sense of a divine eye were upon it? remember the place where thou art, Isa. lx. 13. Act faith upon the omniscience of God. "All the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the heart, and tryeth the reins, and will give to every one of you according to your works," Rev.

ii. 23. "All things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do," Heb. iv. 12. Realize his infinite holiness: into what a serious composed frame did the sight of God in his holiness put the spirit of his prophet, Isa. vi. 5. Labour to get also upon thy heart due apprehensions of the greatness of God, such as Abraham had, Gen. xviii. 27. "I that am dust and ashes, have taken upon me to speak to God." And, lastly remember the jealousy of God, how tender he is over his worship, "And Moses said unto Aaron, this is that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified," Lev. x. 3.

"A man that is praying," saith Bernard, "should behave himself as if he were entering into the court of heaven, where he sees the Lord upon his throne, surrounded with ten thousand of his angels, and saints ministering unto him." When thou comest from a duty, in which the heart hath been toying and wandering, thou mayst say, "Verily God

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God was in this place, and I knew it not." Suppose all the impertinencies and vanities which have past through thine heart in a duty were written out, and interlined with thy petitions, couldst thou have the face to present it to God? Should thy tongue but utter all the thoughts of thy heart in prayer, would not men abhor thee? why, thy thoughts are vocal to God, Psal. cxxxix. 2. If thou wert petitioning the king for thy life, would it not provoke him to see thee playing with thy band-strings, or catching every fly that lights upon thy cloaths, whilst thou art speaking to him about such serious matters? O think sadly upon that scripture, Psal. lxxxvii. 7. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him." Why did God descend in thunderings and lightnings, and dark clouds upon Sinai, Exodus xix. 16, 18. Why did the mountains smoke under him? the people quake and tremble round about him? yea, Moses himself not exempted but to teach the people that great

truth



truth, Heb. xii. 28, 29. "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire." Present God thus before thee, and thy vain heart will quickly be reduced to a more serious frame.

Help 5. Maintain a praying frame of heart in the intervals of duty. What is the reason our hearts are so dull, careless, and wandering, when we come to hear or pray, but because there have been such long intermissions in our communion with God; by reason whereof the heart is out of of a praying frame. If that spiritual warmth, those holy impressions we carry from God in the one duty, were but preserved to kindle another duty, it would be of marvellous advantage to keep the heart intent and serious with God.

To this purpose; those intermediate ejaculations, betwixt stated and solemn duties, are as most sweet drops of Honey: if our ejaculations were more, our lamentations upon this account would be fewer.

Help 6. Endeavour to engage and  
G raise

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raise thy affections to God in Duty,  
it thou wouldest have thy distractions  
cured?

A dropping eye and a melting heart, are seldom troubled as others upon this account: when the soul is intent about any work, it gathers in its strength, and bends all the thoughts about it, and when it is deeply affected, it will be intent: the affections command the thoughts to go after them; deadness causes distraction, and distraction increases deadness: Could you but look upon duties as the galleries of communion in which you walk with God where your souls may be filled with those ravishing and matchless delights that are in his presence, your soul would not offer to stir from thence.

It is with the heart in duty, as it is with those that dig for gold ore: they try here, and finding none they try there; and so go from place to place, till at last they hit upon the rich vein, and there they sit down. If thy heart could but once hit the rich vein in duty, it would dwell and abide there with delight and constancy.

constancy. "O how I love thy law, it is my meditation day and night!" Psal. cxix. 27. The soul could dwell day and night upon its knees, when once its delights, loves, and desires are engaged. What's the reason your hearts are so shuffling, especially in secret duties? Why are you ready to be gone almost as soon as you are come into the presence of God? but because your affections are not engaged.

Help 7. Mourn over the matter to God, and call in assistance from heaven, when vain thoughts assault thy heart in duty.

When the messenger of Satan buffeted Paul by wicked injections, (as is supposed,) he goes to God, and mourns over it before him, 2 Cor. xii. 8. Never slight wandering thoughts in duty, as small matters; follow every vain thought with a deep sigh: turn thee to God with such words as these: Lord I came hither to speak with thee, and here a busy devil, and a vain heart conspiring together, have set upon me. O my God! what an heart have I! shall I ever wait upon thee without

G 2                      distraction?

148 *To keep the Heart from Fears,*  
distraction? When shall I enjoy an  
hour of free communion with thee?  
Help me, my God, this once: do  
but display thy glory before mine  
eyes, and my heart shall quickly be  
recovered. Thou knowest I came  
hither to enjoy thee, and shall I go  
away without thee? See how the  
heart of the poor child works towards  
thee! strives to get near thee, but  
cannot! My heart is aground;  
come thou north wind, blow south  
wind; O for a fresh gale now  
from thy Spirit, to set my affecti-  
ons afloat!—Couldst thou but thus  
affectionately bewail thy distractions  
to God, thou mightest obtain help  
and deliverance from them.

Help 8. Look upon the success  
and sweetness of thy duties, as very  
much depending upon the keeping  
of thy heart, close with God in  
them.

These two things, the success,  
and sweetness of duty, are as dear  
to a Christian as his two eyes, and  
both of these must necessarily be lost,  
if the heart be lost in duty. "Surely  
God heareth not vanity, neither  
doth the Almighty regard it," Job.

xxxv. 13. Well then, when thou findest thy heart under the power of deadness and distraction, say to thy soul, O what do I lose by a careless heart now! My praying times are the choicest parts, the golden spots of all my time. Could I but get up this heart with God, I might now obtain such mercies as would be matter for a song to all eternity.

Help 9. Look upon it as a great discovery of the sincerity or hypocrisy of your hearts, according as you find them careful or careless in this matter.

Nothing will startle an upright heart more than this; What, shall I give way to a customary wandering of heart from God? Shall the spot of the hypocrite appear upon my soul? They indeed can drudge on in the round of duty, never regarding the frames of their hearts, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32.

Help 10. Lastly, it will be of special use to keep thy heart with God in duties, to consider what influence all thy duties have into thine eternity.

These are your seed-times, and what you sow in your duties in this

150 *Keep the Heart from wandring*  
world, you must look to reap the  
fruit of it in another world. If you  
sow to the flesh, of that you shall  
reap corruption; but, if to the  
Spirit, life everlasting, Gal. vi. 7,  
8. O my Soul, answer seriously,  
wouldst thou be willing to reap the  
fruit of vanity in the world to come?  
Darest thou say, when thy thoughts  
are roving to the ends of the earth  
in duty, when thou scarce mindest  
what that thou sayest or hearest,  
Now, Lord, I am sowing to the  
Spirit; now I am providing and  
laying up for eternity; now I am  
seeking for glory, honour, and im-  
mortality; now I am striving to  
enter in at the strait gate; now I  
am taking the kingdom of heaven  
by an holy violence? O such a con-  
sideration as this should make the  
multitudes of vain thoughts, that  
press in upon thy heart in duty, to  
fly seven ways before it. And thus  
I have shewn you how to keep your  
hearts in the times of duty.

Case 7. How a Christian may  
keep his heart from revengeful mo-  
tions, under the greatest injuries and  
abuses from men.

The

The gospel indeed allows a liberty to vindicate our innocence, and assert our rights ; but not to vent our corruptions, and invade God's right : when therefore thou findest thy heart begin to be inflamed by revengeful motions, presently apply the following remedies : And the first is this.

Remedy 1. Urge upon thy heart the severe prohibitions of revenge by the law of God

Remember that this is forbidden fruit, how pleasing and luscious soever it be to our vitiated appetites. Oh, saith nature, revenge is sweet : Oh but, saith God, the effects thereof shall be bitter. How plainly hath God interdicted this flesh-pleasing sin : " Say not I will recompence evil," Prov. xxix. 22. " Say not I will do so to him as he hath done to me," Prov. xxiv. 29. " Recompence to no man evil for evil," Rom. xii. 17. and ver. 19. " Avenge not yourselves but rather give place to wrath : " Nay that is not all, but " If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink." Prov. xxv. 21. The

152 *To keep the Heart from Revenge*  
word feed him, as criticks observe, signifies to feed chearfully and tenderly, as birds do their young ones: The scripture is a great friend to the peace and tranquility of human societies, which can never be preserved, if revenge be not deposed. It was wont to be an argument urged by the Christians to prove their religion to be supernatural and pure, that it forbids revenge which is so sweet to nature; and verily it is a pity such an argument should be lost.

Remedy 2. Set before your eyes the most eminent patterns of meekness and forgiveness, that your souls may fall in love with it.

This is the way to cut off those common pleas of the flesh for revenge as thus, No man would bear such an affront: Yes, such and such have born as bad, and worse. I shall be reckoned a coward, a fool, if I pass by this: No matter, as long as I follow the examples of the wisest and holiest of men. Never did any suffer more and greater abuses from men than Christ did; and never did any carry it more peaceably and forgivingly;



forgivingly : " He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter," &c. Isa. liii. 7. This pattern the Apostle sets before you for your imitation : For even hereunto are you called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps : Who when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not ; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously," 1 Pet. ii. 21, 23. To be of a meek forgiving spirit is Christ like, God-like : " Then shall you be the children of your Father which is in heaven ; for he maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and upon the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," Matth. v. 45. How eminently also did this spirit of Christ rest upon his apostles ! Never were there such men upon earth for true excellency of spirit. None were ever abused more, or suffered their abuses better : " Being reviled," say they, " we bless ; being persecuted, we suffer it ; being defamed,

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we intreat," 1 Cor. iv: 12, 13.  
Mr. Calvin, though a man of a  
quick spirit, yet had attained such  
a degree of this Christ-like forgive-  
ness, that when Luther had used  
some opprobrious language of him,  
the good man said no more but this:  
Although he should call me a devil,  
yet I will acknowledge him to be  
an eminent servant of Jesus Christ.

I have often heard it reported of  
holy Mr. Dodd, that when one,  
enraged at his close convincing doc-  
trine, picked a quarrel with him  
smote him on the face, and dashed  
out two of his teeth, this meek ser-  
vant of Christ spat out the teeth and  
blood into his hand, and said, See  
here, you have knocked out two  
of my teeth, and that without any  
just provocation; but on condition  
I might do your soul good, I would  
give you leave to dash out all the  
rest. Here is the excellency of a  
Christian's spirit, above all the at-  
tainments of moral heathens.  
Though they were excellent at many  
other things, yet they could never  
attain this forgiving spirit. "It is  
the first office of justice," said Tully,  
to

to hurt no body, unless first provoked by an injury :” Whereupon Lactantius : *O quam simplicem veramque sententiam duorum verborum adjectio corrumpit !* What a dainty sentence spoiled the orator by adding these two last words ? Strive then for this excellency of spirit, which is the proper excellency of Christians. Do some singular thing that others cannot do, and then you will have a testimony in their consciences. When Moses out did the magicians, they were forced to confess the finger of God in that business.

Remedy 3. Consider well the quality of the person that hath wronged thee.

Either he is a good man or a wicked man that hath done thee injury. If he be a good man, there is a light and tenderness in his conscience, and that will bring him at last to a sense of the evil he hath done. However, Christ hath forgiven him greater injuries than these and why shouldest not thou ? Will not Christ upbraid him, with any of those wrongs done to him, but

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frankly forgive him all? and wilt thou take him by the throat for some petty abuse that he hath done to thee?

Or is he a wicked man? If so, truly you had more need to exercise pity than revenge towards him, and that upon a double account: for 1. He is beside himself: so indeed is every unconverted sinner, Luke xv. 17. Should you go into Bedlam, and there hear one rail at you, another mock you, and a third threaten you, would you, say I, be revenged upon them? No, you would rather go away pitying them. Alas poor creatures! they are out of their wits, and know not what they do. Besides, 2. There is a day coming, if they repent not, when they will have more misery than you can find in your hearts to wish them. You need not study revenge, God's vengeance sleepeth not, and will shortly take place upon them, and is not that enough? Have they not an eternity of misery coming? If they repent not, this must be the portion of their cup; and if ever they do repent, they will be ready to  
make

make you reparation.

Remedy 4. Keep down thy heart by this consideration, that by revenge thou canst but satisfy a lust, but by forgiveness thou shalt conquer a lust.

Suppose by revenge thou shouldst destroy one enemy, I will shew thee how by forgiving thou shalt conquer three : thine own lusts, the devil's temptations, and thine enemy's heart : And is not this a more glorious conquest ? If by revenge thou overcome thine enemy, yet, as Bernard saith, *Infelix victoria ubi superans virum, succumbit vitio :*

“ Unhappy victory, when by overcoming another man, thou art overcome by thine own corruptions.”

But this way you may obtain a glorious conquest indeed. What an honourable and dry victory did David this way obtain over Saul !

“ And it came to pass when David had made an end of speaking these words, that Saul lift up his voice and wept ; and he said to David, thou art more righteous than I.”

It must be a very disingenuous nature indeed, upon which meekness

ness

158 *To keep the Heart from Revenge*  
nels and forgiveness will not work ;  
a stony heart which this fire will not  
melt. To this sense is that, Prov.  
xxv. 21. " If thine enemy hunger,  
feed him ; if he thirst give him  
drink ; for in so doing thou shalt  
heap coals of fire upon his head." *Sup*  
Some will have it a sin punishing  
fire, but others an heart melting  
fire : to be sure, it will either melt  
his heart or aggravate his misery. *nom*  
Augustine thinks that Stephen's  
prayer for his enemies, was the great  
means of Paul's conversion. *coul*  
*have*

Remedy 5. Seriously propound  
this question to thy own heart,  
have I got any good by the wrongs  
and injuries received, or have I  
not ?

If they have done you no good,  
turn the revenge upon yourselves.  
O that I should have such a bad  
heart, that can get no good out of  
such trouble, O that my spirit  
should be so unlike to Christ's ! The  
patience and meekness of other  
Christins have turned all the inju-  
ries thrown at them into precious  
stones. The spirits of others have  
been raised in blessing God when  
they

they have been loaded with reproaches by the world ; they have bound them as an ornament to their necks. *Superbus fio* (said Luther) *quod video nomen pessimum mihi crescere.* I could even be proud upon it, that I have a bad name among wicked men. To the same purpose Jerome sweetly sayeth, *Gratias ago Deo meo, quod dignus sum quem mundus oderit.* I thank my God, that I am worthy to be hated of the world. Thus their hearts were provoked by injuries to magnify God, and bless him for them. If it work contrary with me, I have cause enough to be filled with self displacency.

If you have got any good by them, if the reproaches and wrongs you have received, have made you search your hearts the more, watch your ways the more narrowly. If their wronging you have made you see how you have wronged God, then let me say for them, as Paul did for himself, Pray forgive them this wrong.

What, can you not find an heart to forgive one that hath been instrumental

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mental of so much good to you?  
That is strange! What though  
they ment it for evil? Yet, if God  
have turned it to good; you have  
no more reason to rage against the  
instrument, than he had, who re-  
ceived a wound from his enemy,  
which only brake and let out that  
impostume, which otherwise had  
been his death.

Remedy 6. It is of excellent use  
to keep the heart from revenge, to  
look up and eye the first cause by  
which all our troubles are ordered,

This will calm and meeken our  
spirits quickly. Never did a wick-  
ed tongue try the patience of a saint,  
more than David's was tried by  
that railing Shemei: yet the spirit  
of this good man was not at all poi-  
soned with revenge, though he goes  
along cursing and casting stones at  
him all the way. Yea, tho' Abi-  
shai offered David, if he pleased,  
the head of that enemy, the king  
said. "What have I to do with you,  
ye sons of Zeruiah? So let him  
curse because the Lord hath said  
unto him, Curse David. Who  
shall then say, Wherefore hast thou  
done



done so?" It may be God uses him as his rod to lash me, because I by my sin made his enemies to blaspheme him; and shall I be angry with the rod? How irrational were that! This also was it that quieted Job. He doth not rail and vow revenge upon the Chaldeans and Sabeans, but eyes God as the orderer of those troubles, and is quiet: "The Lord hath taken away; blessed be his name," Job i. 21.

Object. But you will say, "To turn aside the right of a man, to subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not," Lam. iii. 36.

Ans<sup>r</sup> True, but though it fall not under his approving, yet it doth under his permitting will; and there is a great argument for quiet submission in that: Nay, he hath not only the permitting, but the ordering of all those troubles. Did we see more of an holy God we should shew less of a corrupt nature in such trials.

Remedy 7. Consider how you daily wrong God, and you will not be so easily inflamed with revenge against others that have wronged you.

You

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You are daily grieving and wronging God, and yet he bears, forgives, and will not take vengeance upon you ; and will you be so quick in avenging yourselves upon others ? O what a sharp and terrible rebuke is that ! “ O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredest me : Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee ? Matth. xviii. 32, 33. None should be filled with bowels of pity, forbearance, and mercy, to such as wrong them, as those should be that have experienced the riches of mercy themselves. Methinks the mercy of God to us should melt our very bowels into mercy over others. It is impossible we can be cruel to others, except we forget how kind Christ hath been to us : Those that have found mercy should shew mercy. If kindness cannot work, methinks fear should : “ If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses,” Matth. vi. 15.

Remedy 8. Lastly, Let the consideration

Consideration of the day of the Lord, which draweth nigh, withhold your hearts from anticipating it by acts of revenge.

Why are you so quick? is not the Lord at hand, to avenge all his abused servants? "Be patient, therefore, my brethren, unto the coming of the Lord: Behold the husbandman waiteth, &c. Be ye also patient, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold the Judge standeth at the door," Jam. 5. 7, 8, 9. This text affords three arguments against revenge: 1. The Lord's near approach. 2. The example of the husbandman's patience. 3. The danger we draw upon ourselves by anticipating God's judgment: Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord: he will distribute justice more equally and impartially than you can. They that believe they have a God to right them, will not do much wrong themselves, as to avenge their own wrongs.

Obj. 1. But flesh and blood is not able to bear such abuses.

Sol.

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Sol. If you resolve to consult flesh and blood in such cases, and do no more but what that will enable you to do, never pretend to religion; Christians must do singular and supernatural things.

Obj. 2. But if I peck up such abuses I shall be reckoned a fool, and every one will trample upon me.

Sol. 1. You may be reckoned so among fools, but God and good men will account it your wisdom, and the excellency of your spirit.

2. It must be a base spirit indeed, that will trample upon a meek and forgiving Christian. And thus learn to keep your hearts from revenge, under all provocations.

Case 8. How the heart may be kept meek and patient under great crosses and provocations.

There are three sorts of anger, natural, holy, and sinful anger. Natural, which is nothing else but the motion of the irascible appetite towards an offensive object; and this in itself is no sin; they are propassions rather than passions; the inclinations rather than the sins of nature, as Jerome calls them: "Reason,"

son," saith Plutarch, "is the driver, the soul is the chariot, and the two horses that draw it on in all its motions, are the concupiscible and irascible appetites; whilst these are rightly 'managed by reason, they are not only lawful, but very useful to the soul." God would not have us to be stupid and insensate, though he would have us to be meek and patient. In Eph. iv. 26. he allows the natural motion, but forbids the sinful exorbitancy. 2. Holy anger, which is a pure flame, kindled by an heavenly spark of love to God, and in scripture is called zeal, which is (as one saith) the dagger which love draws in God's quarrel. Such was Lot's against the Sodomites, and that of Moses against the idolatrous Israelites. When Servetus condemned Zwinglius for his rashness, his answer was, *In aliis mansuetus ero, in blasphemiiis in Christum non ita*: "In other cases I will be mild, but in the cause of Christ not so." That which the world calls moderation and mildness here, is in God's account, stupidity and cowardliness: Neither of these are that which

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which I am now persuading you  
to keep your hearts against. But  
3. There is sinful passion that is the  
thing which endangers you. Now  
anger becomes sinful, when it is  
either causeless, Matt. v. 22. or  
excessive ; and that either in mea-  
sure or time. Exceeding the value  
of the impulsive cause, be it more  
transient or abiding, yet it is a sin,  
and is matter of humiliation before  
God. Now the means to keep the  
heart from it under provocations,  
are these.

Means 1. Get low and humble  
thoughts of yourselves, and then  
you will have meek spirits, and  
peaceable deportments towards o-  
thers.

The humble is ever the patient  
man, pride is the root of passion, a  
lofty, will be a surly spirit : Blad-  
ders blown up with wind will not  
ly close together, but prick them,  
and you may pack a thousand in a  
small room, "Only by pride com-  
eth contention." Prov. xiii. 10.  
When we over-rate ourselves, then  
we think we are unworthily treated  
by others, and that provokes : and

here

here (by the way) take notice of one great benefit of acquaintance with your own hearts, even the meekening and calming of our spirits. Christian, methinks thou shouldest know so much by thyself, that it is impossible any should lay thee lower, or have baser thoughts of thee than thou hast of thyself. Some render the original of that text, "Thus the proud man is as he that transgresseth by wine," Hab. ii. 5. and drunkards you know are quarrelsome: O get more humility, and that will bring you more peace.

Means 2. Be often sweetning your spirit in communion with God, and they will not easily be imbittered with wrath towards men.

A quiet conscience never produced an unquiet conversation: The peace of God doth rule in the heart, as an umpire in appeasing strifes, for so much that word, Col. iii. 15. imports, wrath and strife are hugely opposite to the frame and temper of a spiritual heart, because inconsistent with the delight and contentment of that dove-like spirit, which loves a sedate and quiet breast. O  
faith

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faith a soul, that feeds upon the  
sweet communion of the spirit,  
shall the sparkles of provocations  
now catch in my passions, and raise  
such a smoke in my soul as will off-  
end and drive away the Comforter  
from me? This is so effectual a re-  
medy against passion, that I durst  
almost venture in a Christian of an  
hasty nature to make long suffering  
a sign of communion with God.  
Seest thou such a Christian quiet  
and calm under provocations; it is  
very like his soul feeds upon such  
sweetness in God as he is loath to  
leave; and on the other side, seest  
thou a Christian turbulent and cla-  
morous, doubtless all is not well  
within? his spirit is like a bone out  
of joint, which cannot move with-  
out pain and trouble.

Means 3. Get due apprehensions  
of the evil nature and effects of sin-  
ful anger. *Ira furor brevis* "anger  
is a short madness, (saith one) *Ira*  
*animæ febris*, (saith another) "an-  
ger is the fever of the soul." It is  
the interregnum and eclipse of rea-  
son, saith a third..

The effects of it also are very sad.



1. "It grieves the spirit of God." Eph. iv. 30. Banishes him from that breast in which it rages and tumultuates. God is the God of peace; the presence and comforts of God are only enjoyed in a calm: It is a golden note one gives upon the forecited text. God doth not usually bless with peace of conscience, such as make no conscience of peace. 2. It gives advantages to the devil, 1 ph. iv. 26 27. Satan is an angry and discontented spirit, and finds no rest, but in restless hearts: He lives like the Salamander in fire of contention; he bestirs himself when the spirits are in a commotion, sometimes he fills the heart with revengeful thoughts, sometimes he fills the lips, and inflames the tongue with indecent language; even a meek Moses sometimes spake unadvisedly with his lips. 3 It untunes the spirit for duty; upon this account the Apostle dissuades husbands and wives from jarring carriages and contentions, that their prayers be not hindered, 1 Pet. iii. 7. All acts of worship must be suitable to the object of worship; but God is the

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God of Peace, the God of love. 4

To mention no more, it disparages the Christian religion. How would Plato and Pythagoras shame us, if they were now living. Christ was as a lamb for meekness, and doth it become his followers to be like lions?

O keep your hearts, or you will at once lose, not only your own peace, but the credit of religion.

Means 4. Consider how sweet a thing it is to a Christian to conquer his corruptions, and carry away the spoils of them.

“He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty, and that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city,” Prov. xvi. 32. Is there any content in venting a passion? How much more in mortifying it?

When thou comest in a calm mood, or upon a death bed to review thy life, how comfortable then will it be to reflect upon the conquests thou hast got by the fear of God over the evil propensions of thine own heart! it was a memorable saying of Valentinian the Emperor, when he came to die: Among all my conquests (said he) there is but one

that

*under Provocations to Anger.* 171  
that now comforts me ; and being  
asked what that was, he answered,  
I have overcome my worst enemy,  
mine own naughty heart.

Means 5. Shame yourselves by  
setting before you those eminent  
patterns that have been most excel-  
lent for meekness.

Above all, compare your spirits  
with the spirit of Christ, "Learn  
of me (saith he) for I am meek and  
lowly," Math. xi. 29. Christ was  
meek and lowly, but I am proud  
and passionate. It was the high  
commendation of Moses, "Now  
the man Moses was meek above all  
the men of the earth ; and this was  
the man that knew God face to  
face," Num. xii. 3. It is said of  
Calvin and Ursin, that they both  
were of cholerick natures, but yet  
had so learned the meekness of  
Christ, as not to utter one word  
under the greatest provocation  
unbecoming religion. When I  
read the pretty stories of the very  
heathens, that never had the ad-  
vantages we have, how the Pytha-  
goreans, whatever feuds had been  
among them in the day, would

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hush all, by tending to each other  
this message, The sun is almost set;  
and that of Plato to his scholar I  
would beat thee, if I were not an-  
gry.

When I read what lenity and ten-  
derness Lycurgus shewed to an in-  
solent fellow that had struck out one  
of his eyes; I am ashamed to see  
how much Christians are out-shot  
by heathens, who by meer moral  
arguments and precepts, had thus  
meekened their spirits, and conquer-  
ed their passions. The dim light of  
nature could teach Seneca to say,  
that anger will hurt a man more  
than the offence; for there is a  
certain bound in the offence, but I  
know not how far mine anger will  
carry me. It is a shame that these  
men who come so far behind us in  
means and advantages, should so  
far out-strip us in meekness and pa-  
tience.

Means 6. Lastly. Avoid all irri-  
tating occasions.

He that will not hear the clapper,  
must not pull the rope. "Griev-  
ous words stir up anger (saith Solo-  
mon)" Prov. xv. 1. Do not only  
pray

*under Provocations to anger.* 173

pray, and resolve against it but get as far as you can out of the way of it; it is true spiritual valour to run as fast, and as far as we can out of sin's way: If you can but avoid anger in its first rise, there is no great fear of it afterwards; for it is not with this sin, as it is with other sins; other sins grow to their full strength by degrees, their first motions are the weakest, but this sin is born in its full strength, it is strongest at first, withstand it then, and it falls before you. Thus learn to keep your hearts when provocations arise.

Season 9. The ninth season of exerting our greatest diligence, is the critical hour of temptation, wherein Satan lays close siege to the Fort-Royal of a christian's heart, and often surprises it for want of watchfulness. To keep thy heart now, is no less a mercy than a duty; few Christians are so well skilled in detecting the fallacies, and retorting the arguments by which Satan uses to draw them to sin, as to come off safe in those encounters. 'Watch and pray (saith our Lord) lest ye

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enter into temptation, Mark xiv 38.  
Even an eminent David, and a wise  
Solomon, have smarted for their  
carelessness at such a time as this.  
The ninth case therefore shall be  
this :

Case 9. How a Christian, when  
strongly solicited by the devil to sin,  
may keep his heart from yielding to  
the temptation ?

Now there are six special argu-  
ments, by which Satan subtly insi-  
nuates and winds in the temptation,  
in all which, I shall offer thee some  
help for the keeping of thy heart,  
and the first is this.

Arg. 1. The first argument is  
drawn from the pleasure of sin :  
O (saith Satan) here is pleasure to be  
enjoyed ; temptation comes with a  
smiling countenance, and charming  
voice : What art thou so flegmatic  
and dull a soul, as not to feel the  
powerful charms of pleasure ? Who  
can withhold himself from such de-  
lights ?

Now thine heart may be kept  
from the danger of this temptation,  
by retorting this argument of plea-  
sure upon the tempter ; which is  
done two ways.

1. Thou tellest me Satan that sin is pleasant : be it so : But are the gripes of conscience, and the flames of hell so too ? Is it pleasant to feel the wounds and throbs of conscience ? If so, " Why did Peter weep so bitterly," Mat. xxvi. 75. " Why did David cry out of broken bones," Psal. li. I hear what thou sayest of the pleasure of sin, and I have read what David hath said of the terrible effects of sin in his psalm, to bring to his remembrance, " Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. Psal. xxxviii. ver. 2." " There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger ; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin. ver. 3."

2. What talkest thou of the pleasure of sin, when by experience I know there is more true pleasure in the mortification, than can be in the commission of sin. O how sweet is it to please God, to obey conscience, to preserve inward peace, to be able to say, in this trial I have discovered the sincerity of my heart ; now I know I fear the

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Lord, now I see that I truly hate sin. Hath sin any such delight as this? This will check that temptation.

Arg. 2. The second argument is drawn from the secrecy of sin. O (saith Satan) this sin will never, disgrace thee abroad; none shall know of it.

This argument may be retorted, and the heart secured thus: thou sayest none shall know it; but Satan, canst thou find a place void of the divine presence for me to sin in? Thus Job secured his heart from this temptation.

“Doth he not see my ways, and count all my steps? Job xxxi 4.”

“Therefore he makes a covenant with his eyes, ver. 1.” After the same manner Solomon teaches us to retort this temptation, “And why, my son, wilt thou be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings. Prov. v. 20--21.” What if I hide it from the eyes of all the world for the present, I cannot hide it



from God ; and the time is at hand, when all the world shall know too ; for the word assures me, ' That what is done now in secret, shall be proclaimed as upon the house top, Luke viii. 17."

Arg. 3. The third argument by which Satan tempteth to sin, is taken from the gain and profit arising out of it : Why so nice and scrupulous ? it is but stretch conscience a little, and thou mayest make thyself : Now is thy opportunity.

The heart may be kept from falling into this dangerous snare, by retorting the temptation thus : " But what profit will it be if a man should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? Matth. xvi. 26." O my soul, my precious soul ! shall I hazard thee for all the good that is in this world ? There is an immortal spirit dwelling in this fleshly tabernacle of more value than all earthly things, which must live to all eternity, when this world shall lie in ashes. A soul, for which Jesus Christ shed his precious and invaluable blood : I was sent into this

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world to provide for this soul ; indeed God hath committed to me the care of my body, but (as one happily expresses it) with this difference. \*

Arg. 4. The fourth argument is drawn from the smallness of the sin. It is but a little one, a small matter, a trifle ; who should stand upon such niceties ?

1. But is the majesty of heaven a little one too ? “ If I commit this sin, I must offend and wrong a great God, Isa. xl. 15, 16, 17, -- 22.

2. Is there any little hell to torment little sinners in ? Are not the least sinners there filled with the fulness of wrath ? O there is great wrath treasured up for such as the world counts little sinners.

Arg. 5. A fifth argument is drawn from the grace of God, and hopes of pardon : Come, God will pass by this as an infirmity, he will not be extreme to mark it.

But, stay my heart.

1. Where do I find a promise of mercy to presumptuous sinners ? Indeed, for involuntary surprisals, unavoidable, and lamented infirmities, there

• Gospel Glass, p. 3.

there is a pardon of course ; but where is the promise to a daring sinner, that sin upon a presumption of pardon ? Pause a while, my soul, upon that scripture, “ And if a soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she-goat of the first year for a sin-offering, &c. But the soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord, and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Num. xv. 27. 30.”

2. If God be a God of so much mercy, how can I abuse so good a God ? Shall I take so glorious an attribute as the mercy of God is, and abuse it unto sin ? Shall I wrong him, because he is good ? “ Or should not rather the goodness of God lead me to repentance, Rom. ii. 4.” “ There is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared, Psal. cxxx. 4.”

Arg. 6. Lastly, Sometimes Satan encourages to sin from the examples of good and holy men : Thus, and thus they have sinned, and been restored ; therefore, this may consist with grace, and thou be saved nevertheless.

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1. Though good men may commit the same sin materially, which I am tempted to, yet did ever a good man venture to sin, upon such a ground and encouragement as this.

2. Did God record these examples for my imitation, or for my warning? Are they set up as sea-marks, that I might avoid the rocks upon which they split? "Now these were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after the evil things as they also lusted," 1 Cor. x. 6.

Thus learn to keep your hearts in the hour of temptation to sin.

Season 10. "The tenth special season to keep the heart with all diligence, in the time of spiritual darkness and doubting, when it is with the soul, as it was with Paul in his dangerous voyage, neither sun nor moon, nor stars appeared for many days; when, by reason of the hidings of God's face, the prevalency of corruption, and the inevidence of grace, the soul is even ready to give up all its hopes and comforts for lost; to draw sad and desperate conclusions upon itself;

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to call its former comforts vain delusions, its grace hypocrisy ;—when the serene and clear heavens are overcast with dark clouds, yea, filled with thunders and horrible tempests ;—when the poor pensive soul sits down and weeps forth this sad lamentation : “ My hope is perished from the Lord.” Now, to keep the heart from sinking in such a day as this, to enable it to maintain its own sincerity, is a matter of great difficulty. The tenth case, then, will be this.”

Case 10. How the people of God in dark and doubting seasons, may keep their hearts from entertaining such sad conclusions about their estates, as destroy their peace, and unfit them for their duty.

There are two general heads, to which the grounds of doubting our sincerity may be reduced. 1. God’s carriage towards the soul, either in the time of some extraordinary affliction, or of some long and sad desertion : or, 2. The soul’s carriage towards God : and here it usually argues against the truth of its own graces : Either, 1. From  
its

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its relapses into the same sins, from  
which it hath formerly risen, with  
shame and sorrow : or, 2. From  
the sensible declinings of its affections  
from God : or, 3. From the excess  
of the affections towards creature-  
comforts and enjoyments : or, 4.  
From enlargements in public, and  
often straitenings in private, duties :  
or, 5. From some horrid injecti-  
ons of Satan, with which the soul  
is greatly perplexed : or, lastly,  
From God's silence, and seeming  
denial of its long depending suits and  
prayers.

These are the common grounds  
of those sad conclusions. Now, in  
order to the establishment and sup-  
port of the heart, in this condition,  
it will be necessary,

1. That you be acquainted with  
some general truths, which have a  
tendency to the settlement of a  
trembling and doubting soul.

2. That you may be rightly in-  
structed about the forementioned-  
particulars, which are the grounds  
of your doubtings.

The general truths requisite for  
poor, doubting souls to be acquainted  
with,

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with are these :

1. That every working and appearance of hypocrisy doth not presently prove the person, in whom it is, to be an hypocrite. You must carefully distinguish between the presence and predominancy of hypocrisy : There are remains of deceitfulness in regenerate hearts. David and Peter had sad experience of it ; yet the standing frame and general bent of the heart being upright, did not denominate them hypocrites.

2. That we ought as well to hear what can be said for us as against us. It is the sin of upright hearts sometimes to use an over rigid and merciless severity against themselves : They do not indifferently consider the case of their own souls. It is in this case, as Solomon speaks in another : " There is that maketh himself rich, and yet hath nothing, and there is that maketh himself poor, and yet hath great riches," Prov. xiii. 7. It is the damning sin of the self-flattering hypocrite, to make his condition better than it is ; and it is the sin and folly of some upright

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upright ones, to make their condition worse than indeed it is. Why should you be such enemies to your own peace? to read over the evidences of God's love to your souls, as a man doth a book which he intends to confute? Why do you study to find evasions, to turn off these comforts which are due to you? It is said of Joseph, that he was minded to put away his espoused Mary, not knowing that that holy thing which was conceived in her, was by the holy Ghost: and this may be your case. A third truth is this.

3. That many a saint hath charged and condemned himself of that, which God will never charge him with nor condemn him for, "Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear," saith the Church, Isa. lxiii. 17. and yet the verse before manifests, that their hearts were not so hardened. Godly Bradford wrote himself an hypocrite, a painted sepulchre; yet doubtless God acquitted him of that charge.

4. Every thing which is a ground of grief to the people of God is not



sufficient ground of questioning their sincerity. There are many more things to trouble you than here to stumble you. If upon every slip and failing thro' infirmity, you should question all that ever was wrought upon you, your life must be made up of doubtings and fears ; you can never attain a settled peace, nor live that life of praise and thankfulness the gospel calls for.

5. The soul is not at all times fit to pass judgement upon its own condition. To be sure, in the dark day of desertion, when the soul is benighted, and in the stormy day of temptation, when the soul is in a hurry, it is utterly unfit to judge its estate : " Examine your hearts upon your beds, and be still," Psal. iv. This is rather a season of watching and resisting, than for judging and determining.

6. That every breach of peace with God is not a breach of covenant with God. The wife hath many weaknesses and failings, often grieves and displeases her husband,  
yet,

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yet, in the main, is faithful, and truly loves him. These failings may cause him to alter his carriage, but not to withdraw his love, or deny his relation: "Return, O backsliding Israel, for I am married unto you."

7. Lastly, Whatever our sin or trouble be, it should rather drive us to God than from God. "Pardon my sin, for it is great," Psal. xxv. 11. Suppose it be true, that thou hast so and so sinned, that thou art thus long and sadly deserted, yet it is a false inference, that therefore thou shouldest be discouraged, as if there were no help for thee in thy God. When you have well digested these seven establishing truths, if still the doubt remain, then consider, what may be replied to the particular grounds of those doubts: As,

1. You doubt and are ready to conclude, the Lord hath no regard or love for your souls, because of some extraordinary affliction which is come upon you; but I would not have thy soul so to conclude, till you be able satisfactorily to answer these three questions.

Quest 1.

Quest 1. If great troubles and afflictions be marks of God's hatred, should not impunity and constant prosperities be tokens of his love ; not *contrariarum contraria est ratio et consequentia* : " Of contrary things there is a contrary reason and consequence : " But is this so indeed ? or saith not the scripture quite otherwise ? " The prosperity of fools destroy them," Prov. i. 32. Psal. lxxiii. 5.

Quest. 2. Dare I draw the same conclusion upon all others that have been as much, yea more afflicted, than myself ? If this argument conclude against thee, then so it doth against every one in thy condition ; yea, the greater the affliction of any child of God hath been, the more strongly the argument still concludes ; and then woe to David, Job, He-man, Paul, and all that have been afflicted as they were.

Quest. 3. Had God exempted you only from those troubles, which all other his people feel, would not that have been a greater ground of doubting to you than this ? especially since the scripture saith, " If ye be without

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chastenings, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards and not sons," Heb. xii. 8.

O how is our Father put to it by froward children! If he afflicts, then one cries, He loves me not: If he exempts from affliction, others question his love upon that ground.

Surely you have other work to do under the rod than this.

2. Or do you rashly infer, The Lord hath no love for you, because he hides his face from you? that your condition is miserable, because dark and uncomfortable? Before you draw such rash conclusions, see what answer you can give to these four following queries.

Query 1. If any action of God towards his people, will bear a favourable, as well as a harsh and severe construction, why should not his people interpret it in the best sense? And is not this such? may he not have a design of love in this dispensation? may he not depart for a season and not for ever, yea, that he might not depart for ever? You are not the first that have mistaken God's ends in desertion: "Zion  
said,

said, the Lord hath forgotten me,"  
Isa. xlix. 14. Was it so indeed?  
Nothing less: "Can a mother for-  
get, &c. ver. 15.

Query 2 Do you find the marks  
of an absolute, total, and final de-  
sertion upon your spirits, that you  
are so apt to conclude yours to be  
such? Do you find your hearts in-  
clined to forsake God? Have you  
lost your conscientious tenderness in  
point of sin? If so sad characters  
appear unto you indeed. But, if  
in this dark hour, you are as tender  
of sin as ever, as much resolved to  
cleave to God as ever—I cannot,  
I will not forsake God, let him do  
what he will with me—Oh no, I  
cannot!—If your hearts work thus,  
it can be but a partial, limited, and  
temporary desertion. By this he  
still keeps his interest in your hearts,  
a sure sign he will return and visit  
you again.

Query 3. Is sense and feeling a  
competent judge of God's actions  
and designs. Or may a man safely  
rely upon its testimony after so  
many discoveries of the fallibility of  
it? Is this a sound argument, If  
God

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God had any love for my soul, if it  
were not quite gone, I should feel it  
now as well as at former times;  
but I cannot feel it, therefore it is  
quite gone? Do you not know the  
sun still keeps on his course in the  
heavens, even in full and close wea-  
ther, when you cannot see it? and  
may it not be so with the love of  
God? Read Isa. l. 10. May I not  
as well conclude in winter, when  
the flowers have hid their beautiful  
heads under ground, they are quite  
dead and gone, because I cannot  
find them in December where I saw  
them in May?

Query 4. Think you the Lord  
cares not to break his children's  
hearts, and his own promise too?  
Hath he no more regard to either?  
If he return no more, these must  
be the consequents, Isa. lvii. 16,  
17. Heb. xiii. 5.

Well then, from God's carriage  
towards you, either in affliction or  
desertion, no such discouraging  
heart-sinking conclusions can be in-  
ferred. Next let us see whether  
they may not be interred from our  
carriage towards God; and here the  
principles

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principal grounds of doubting are such as these :

1. I have fallen again into the same sin, from which I have formerly risen with repentance and resolution ; therefore my sinning is customary sinning, a spot that is not the spot of God's children. Hence the upright soul trembles : upon this it is ready to affirm, that all its former humiliations for, and oppositions unto sin, were but acts of hypocrisy : but stay poor trembling heart.

Query 1. If this be so, how comes it to pass, that Christ put such a favourable construction upon the disciples sleeping the third time, when he had as often reproved them for it ? Matth. xxvi. 40, 41. And how is it that we find in scripture so many promises made not only to the first sins, but also to the backslidings of God's people, Jer. iii. 22. Hos. xiv. 4.

Query 2. Is not your repentance and care renewed, as often as your guilt is renewed ? yea, the oftener you sin, the more you are troubled ? It is not so in customary sinning, the rise whereof Bernard excellently dis-

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discovers, 1 Saith he; "When a  
man, accustomed to good, sinneth  
grievously, it seems importable yea  
he seems to descend alive into hell.  
2. In process of time it seems not  
importable; but heavy: And be-  
twixt importable and heavy there is  
no small descent. 3. Next it be-  
comes light, his conscience smites  
but faintly, and he feels not the  
stripes of it. 4. Then there is not  
only a total insensibleness of it, but  
that which was bitter and displea-  
sing, is now become sweet and  
pleasing in some degree. 5. Then  
it is turned into custom, and not only  
pleases, but daily pleases. Lastly,  
Custom is turned into nature: He  
cannot be pulled away from it, but  
defends and pleads for it. This  
is customary sinning, this is the  
way of the wicked, but the quite  
contrary is our condition."

Query 3. Are you sure from scrip-  
ture grounds, that a good man may  
not relapse again and again into the  
same sin? It is true, but as for gross  
sins they are not use to relapse into  
them: David committed adultery  
no more; Paul persecuted the church



no more; Peter denied Christ no more. But I speak of ordinary infirmities: Job's friends were good men, yet, saith he, "These ten times have ye reproached me," so then, no such conclusions follow from this first ground of doubting.

2. The second ground is, the declining and withering of our affections to spiritual things. O saith the upright soul, if ever I had been planted a right seed, I should have been as a green olive tree in the house of my God; but my branches wither, therefore my root is naught. But stay:

Query 1. May you not be mistaken about the decay of grace, and fading of your affections? What if they be not so quick and ravishing as at first? may not that be recompensed in the spirituality and solidity of them? "I pray God your love may abound more and more in all judgement," 1 Phil. ix. It may be more solid, though not so fervent. Or, do you not mistake by looking forward to what you would be, rather than backward to what once you were? It is a good note of Ames:

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“ We discern the growth of grace, as the growth of plants, which we perceive rather to have grown than to grow.”

Query 2. But grant it be so indeed as you affirm, must it needs follow, that the root of the matter is not in you ? David's last ways are distinguished from his first, 2 Chron. xvii. 3. and yet, both first and last a holy man. The church of Ephesus is charged by Christ for “ leaving her first love ;” and yet a golden candlestick, many precious saints, in that church, Rev. ii. 2, 3, 4.

3. A third ground of these sad conclusions, is the excess of our affections to some creature enjoyments. I fear I love the creature more than God ; and, if so, my love is but hypocritical. I sometimes feel stronger, and more sensible motions of my heart to some earthly comforts, than I do to heavenly objects : therefore my soul is not upright in me But stay soul :

Query 1. May not a man love God more solidly and strongly than the creature, and yet his affections to the creatures be sometimes moved

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ed more violently and sensibly than towards God? As rooted malice argues a stronger hatred than a sudden though more violent passion, so we must measure our love, not by a violent motion of it now and then, but by the depth of the root and constancy of its actings. Because David was so passionately moved for Absalom, Joab concludes that if he lived, and all the people had died, it would have pleased him well. But that was argued more like a soldier than a logician.

Query 2. If you indeed love the creature for itself, if you make it your end and religion but a means, then the conclusion is rightly drawn upon you; but if you love the creature in reference to God, and see nothing in it separated from him, though sometimes your affections offend in the excess, this is consistent with sincere love to God. To love the creature inordinately, *i. e.* to put it in God's room, and make it a man's end, this is the love of a carnal heart: To love it immoderately, *i. e.* to let out more affection to it

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than we ought, is sometimes the sin  
of regenerate hearts.

Query 3. Have not many souls  
feared as you do, that when Christ  
and creature should stand as com-  
petitors in some eminent trial, they  
should forsake Christ rather than the  
creature, and yet, when brought to  
that dilemma, have been able to  
cast all the world at their heels for  
Christ? Many of the martyrs had  
such fears, and thus they were sa-  
tisfied. The prevalency of love is  
best seen at parting: There may  
be more love to Christ in thy soul  
than thou art aware of; and, if  
God bring thee to such a pinch,  
thou mayest see it.

4. A fourth ground of these sad  
conclusions is from hence, that we  
find our hearts sometimes more  
straitened in private than in public  
duties. Oh, if my soul were sin-  
cere, its actings in duty would be  
uniform: I fear I am but a Pharisee  
upon this ground. It is sad indeed  
we should at any time find our hearts  
straitened in private. But,

Query 1. Do not all thine enlarge-  
ments in duty, whether public or  
private,

private, depend upon the Spirit, who is the Lord of influences, and according as he gives out, or holds back these influences, so art thou enlarged or straitened? And what if sometimes he pleases to give that in a public, which he with-holds in a private duty, as long as thy soul is satisfied in neither, without communion with God, and the straitness of thy heart is indeed its burden, doth that argue thee to be an hypocrite?

Query 2. Dost thou not make conscience of private duties, and set thyself as before the Lord in them? Indeed, if thou live in the constant neglect, or careless performance of them, if thou art curious about public, and careless about private duties, that would be a sad sign; when you have conscientiously performed, and often met with God in them, it will not follow you are insincere, because that communion is interrupted. Besides,

Query 3. May there not be something at some times in public, which is wanting in a private duty, to raise and advantage thine affecti-

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ous? God may sometimes make use  
of the melting affections of them,  
with whom thou hearest or prayest,  
as petty instruments to move thy af-  
fections; this advantage is wanting  
in private: therefore, from hence,  
(the case so standing,) no such infe-  
rence can be drawn.

5. Another ground is from those  
horrid injections of Satan, with  
which, the soul is perplexed. By  
these I may see what an heart I have,  
Can grace be where these are?

Yes, grace may be where such  
thoughts are, though not where they  
are lodged and consented to, dost  
thou cry out under the burden; enter  
thy protest in heaven against them:  
strive to keep up holy and reverent  
thoughts of God? then it is a rape  
not a voluntary prostitution.

6. The last ground of these sad  
conclusions, is the Lord's long si-  
lence, and seeming denial of our long  
depending suits and prayers. O, if  
God had any regard to my soul, he  
would have heard my cries before  
now! but I have no answer from  
him, therefore no interest in him.  
But stay doubting soul:

Que-

Query 1. Have not many saints stumbled upon this stone before thee, "I said in my haste, that I am cut off from before thine eyes, nevertheless thou hearest the voice of my supplication. Psal. xxxi. 22. So the Church, "Thou coveredst thyself with a cloud that our prayers should not pass through." "Then said I, I am cast out of thy sight," Jonah ii. 4. And may not you be mistaken in this matter as well as they?

Query 2. We dare not conclude from God's suspension of the answer of our prayer, that he hears it not, or will not answer it in due time, "God may bear long with his own elect that cry unto him day and night, Luke xviii. 7.

Query 3. Can you deny but that there are some signs appearing in your soul, even whilst God suspends his answer, that argues your prayers are not rejected by him? As, 1. Though no answer come, yet you are still resolved to wait. You dare not say as that prophane wretch did, "This evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer? 2 Kings vi. 33.

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2. You can clear and justify God still, and lay the reason of his silence upon yourselves. So did David, *Psal. xxii. 2, 3.* "O my God, I cry in the day time, and thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy," &c. 3. The suspension of God's answer makes you inquisitive into your hearts; what evils are there that obstruct your prayers. So the church, *Lam. iii. 8.* "He shutteth out my prayer." And how this doth work, you may see ver 40. "Let us search and try our ways." Well then, neither from hence may you conclude that God hath no love for your souls.

And thus I have shewn you how to keep your hearts in a dark and doubting season from *Caution.* those desperate conclusions of unbelief. God forbid any false heart should encourage itself from these things. It is our unhappiness, that when we give saints and sinners their proper portions, that each of them are so prone to take up the other's part.

Season 11. "The eleventh special

al



al season, calling for this diligence to keep our hearts, is when sufferings for religion come to an height. Then look to your hearts: 'All these are the beginning of sorrows. And they shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my names sake. And THEN shall many be offended.' *Math. xxiv. 8, 9, 10*—When sufferings for religion grow hot, then blessed is he that is not offended in Christ. Troubles are then at a height, 1. When a man's nearest friends and relations forsake and leave him, *Micah vii. 5, 6.* 2 *Tim. iv. 16* when a man is engaged alone. 2. When it comes to resisting to blood, *Heb. xii. 4.* 3 When temptations are presented to us in our sufferings, *Heb. xi. 37.* 4. When eminent persons of profession turn aside, and desert the cause of Christ, *2 Tim. ii. 19.* 5. When God hides his face in a suffering hour, *Jer. xvii. 17.* 6. When Satan falls upon us with strong temptations to question the grounds of our sufferings, or the soul's interest in Christ—now it is hard to keep the

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heart from turning back, and the  
steps from declining God's ways :—  
the 11th case then shall be this :”

Case 11. How the heart may be  
kept from relapsing under the great-  
est sufferings for religion.

If the bitterness of sufferings at  
any time cause thy soul to distaste  
the way of God, and have thoughts  
of forsaking it, stay thine heart un-  
der that temptation by propounding  
these eight questions solemnly to it.

Quest. 1. What reproach and dis-  
honour shall I pour upon Christ and  
religion, by deserting him at such a  
time as this ? This will proclaim to  
all the world, that how much foe-  
ver I have boasted of the promises,  
yet, when it comes to the trial, I  
dare hazard nothing upon the credit  
of them ; and how will this open  
the mouths of Christ's enemies to  
blaspheme ? O ! better had I never  
been born, than that worthy name  
should be blasphemed through me ?  
Shall I furnish the triumphs of the  
uncircumcised ? Shall I make mirth  
in hell ? O, if I did but value the  
name of Christ, as much as many  
a wicked man values his own name,

I would never endure to see it exposed to such contempt. Will proud dust and ashes venture death, yea, hell, rather than a blot upon their name, and shall I venture nothing to save the honour and reputation of Christ.

Quest. 2. Dare I violate my conscience to save my flesh? who shall comfort me when conscience wounds me? What comfort is there in life, liberty, or friends, when peace is taken away from the inner man? When Constantius threatened to cut off Samosatenus' right hand, if he would not subscribe somewhat that was against his conscience, he held up both his hands to the messenger that was sent, saying, He shall cut off both rather than I will do it. Farewell all peace, joy, and comfort from that day forward. "Had Zimri peace that slew his master?" said Jezabel. So say I here, Had Judas peace? had Spira peace? and shall you have peace if you tread in their steps? O Consider what you do!

Quest 3. Is not the public interest of Christ and religion infinitely

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more than any private interest of my own? It is a famous passage that of Terentius, captain to Adrian the Emperor: He presented a petition to Adrian, that the Christians might have a temple by themselves to worship God apart from the Arians. The emperor tore his petition and threw it away, bidding him ask something for himself, and it should be granted: But he modestly gathered up the petition again, and told him, If he could not be heard in God's cause, he would never ask any thing for himself. Yea, even Tully, though a heathen, could say, *Ne immortalitatem quidem contra rempublicam*: "He would not accept even of immortality itself against the commonwealth" Oh, if we had more publick, we should not have such cowardly spirits.

Quest. 4. Did Jesus Christ serve me so, when for my sake he exposed himself to far greater sufferings than can be before me? His sufferings were great indeed; he suffered from all hands, in all his offices, in every member, not only in his body, but in his soul; yea, the sufferings

ferings of his soul were the very soul of his sufferings : Witness the bloody sweat in the garden ; witness the heart melting and heaven rending cry upon the cross : “ My God my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? And yet he flinched not : “ He endured the cross, despising the shame.” Alas ? what are my sufferings compared with Christ’s ? He hath drunk up all that vinegar and gall that would make all my sufferings bitter. When one of the martyrs was asked, why he was so merry at his death ? Oh, said he, it is because the soul of Christ was so heavy at his death. Did Christ bear such a burden for me, with unbroken patience and constancy ? and shall I shrink back for momentary and light afflictions for him ?

Quest 5. Is not eternal life worth the suffering of a moments pain ? If I suffer with him I shall reign with him. O how will men venture life and limbs for a fading crown ! swim through seas of blood to a throne ! and will I venture nothing ? suffer nothing for the crown of glory that fadeth not away ? My dog  
will

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will follow my horse's heels from  
morning to night, take many a wea-  
ry step through mire and dirt, ra-  
ther than leave me, though at night  
all he gets by it is bones and blows.  
If my soul had any true greatness,  
any spark of generosity in it, how  
would it despise the sufferings of the  
way, for the glory of the end ! how  
would it break down all difficulties  
before it, whilst by an eye of faith  
it sees the forerunner who is already  
entered, standing, as it were, upon  
the walls of heaven, with the crown  
in his hand saying, " He that over-  
cometh shall inherit all things."—  
Come on then, my soul, come on,  
there is eternal life laid up for them  
that by continuance in well doing,  
seek for glory, honour and immor-  
tality, Rom. ii. 7.

Quest. 6. Can I so easily cast off  
the society and company of saints,  
and give the right hand of fellowship  
to the wicked ? How can I part with  
such lovely companions as these have  
been ? How often have I been be-  
nefitted by their counsel ? Ezra x 3.  
How often refreshed, warmed, and  
quickened by their company ? Ec-  
cles.

cles. iv. 10, 11—How often have I fasted and prayed with them! What sweet counsel have I taken with them, and gone to the house of God in company! And shall I now shake hands with them and say, Farewell all you saints for ever, I shall never be among you more? Come drunkards, swearers, blasphemers, persecutors, you shall be my everlasting companions? O rather let my body and soul be rent asunder, than that ever I should say thus to the excellent of the earth, in whom is all my delight.

Quest. 7. Have I seriously considered the terrible comminations against backsliders? O my heart! darest thou turn back upon the very points of such threatenings as these? “Then said the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord, for he shall be like the heathen in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh,” *i. e.* the curse of God shall wither him root and branch. Jer. v. 6. And Heb. xiv. 26, 27. “If we sin wilfully after we have received

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received the knowledge of the truth,  
there remaineth no more sacrifice  
for sin, but a certain fearful looking  
for of judgement, and fiery indig-  
nation which shall devour the ad-  
versaries." And again, ver. 38.  
"If any man draw back, my soul  
shall have no pleasure in him." As  
if he should say, Take him world,  
take him devil for your own, I have  
no delight in him. O, who dare  
draw back, when God hath hedged  
up the way with such terrible threats  
as these!

Quest 8. Can I look Christ in the  
face at the day of judgement, if I  
desert him now?

"He that is ashamed of me and  
of my words, in this adulterous and  
sinful generation, of him shall the  
Son of man be ashamed, when he  
cometh in the glory of his Father,  
with the holy angels," Mark viii.  
38. yet a little while and ye shall  
see the sign of the Son of man, com-  
ing in the clouds of heaven, with  
power and great glory. The last  
trump shall sound, the dead, both  
small and great, even all that sleep  
in the dust, shall awake, and come  
before



before that great white throne on which Christ shall sit in that day. And now, do but imagine thou sawest the trembling knees and quivering lips of guilty sinners ; imagine thou hearest the dreadful sentence of the Judge upon them, " Go ye cursed," &c. and the cry, the weeping, wailing, and wringing of hands that there shall be ! Wouldest thou desert Christ now to protract a poor miserable life on earth ? If the word of God be true, if the sayings of Christ be sealed and faithful, this shall be the portion of the apostate. It is an easy thing to stop the mouth of conscience now, but will it be easy to stop the mouth of the Judge then ? Thus keep thy heart, that it " depart not from the living God."

Sea. 12. The twelfth season of looking diligently to our hearts, and keeping them with greatest care, is the time of sickness. " When a child of God draws nigh to eternity, when there are but a few sands more in the upper part of his glass to run down, now Satan busily bestirs himself ; of him it may be said, as of  
the

the natural serpent, *Nunquam nisi moriens producit in longum*; 'He is never seen at his full length till dying;' and now his great design, since he cannot win the soul from God, is to discourage, and make it unwilling to go to God; though the gracious soul with Jacob, should then rouse up itself upon a dying bed, and rejoice, that the marriage day of the Lamb is now almost come, though it should then say with dying Austin, *Vivere remota ut Christo vivam*, 'I despise life to be with Christ;' or as dying Mil- lius, when one asked him, whether he was willing to die? O said he! *Illius est nolle mori qui nolit iri ad Christum*, 'Let him be unwilling to die, who is unwilling to go to Christ.' But O! what shrinking from death? what loathsomeness to depart, may sometimes (indeed too frequently) be observed in the people of God? How loath are some of them to take death by the cold hand? If such a liberty were indulged to us, not to be dissolved till we dissolve ourselves; when should we say with St. Paul, I de-

fire to be dissolved? Well then, the  
last case shall be this,"

Case 12. How the people of God  
in times of sickness, may get their  
hearts loose from all earthly engage-  
ments, and persuade them into a  
willingness to die.

And there are seven arguments  
which I shall urge upon the people  
of God at such a time as this, to  
make them chearfully entertain the  
messengers of death, and die as well  
as live like saints, and the first is  
this.

Arg. 1. First the harmlessness of  
death to the people of God. Though  
it keeps its dart, it hath lost its sting,  
A saint (to allude to that, Isa. xi.  
8.) "May play upon the hole of  
the asp, and put his hand into the  
cockatrice's den." Death is the  
cockatrice or asp; the grave is the  
hole or den. A saint need not fear  
to put his hand boldly into it; it  
hath left and lost its sting in the sides  
of Christ, "O death! where is thy  
sting," 1 Cor. xv. 55. why art  
thou afraid. O saint! that this  
sickness may be thy death, as long  
as thou knowest that the death of  
Christ,

Christ, is the death of death ; indeed, it thou didst die in thy sins," as Joh. viii. 21. " If death as a king did reign over thee," Rom. v. 14. " If it could feed upon thee as the lion doth upon the prey he hath taken," as Psal. xlix. 14, " If hell followed the pale horse," as it is Rev. vi. 8. Then thou mightest well startle and shrink back from it, but when God hath put away thy sins from thee, " as far as the east is from the west," as long as there is no other evil left in death for thee to encounter with, but bodily pain ; as long as the scriptures represent it to thee under such harmless and easy notions, as " the putting off thy cloaths," 2 Cor. v. 2, " and lying down to sleep upon thy bed," why shouldst thou be afraid ? there is as much difference betwixt death to the people of God, and others, as betwixt the unicorn's horn, when it is upon the head of that fierce beast and when it is in the apothecary's shop, where it is made salubrious and medicinal.

Arg. 2. Thy heart may be kept from shrinking back at such a time

as this, by considering the necessity of death, in order to the full fruition of God.

Whether thou art willing to die or no, I assure thee there is no other way to obtain the full satisfaction of thy soul, and compleat its happiness. Till the hand of death do thee the kind office to draw aside the curtain of flesh, thy soul cannot see God : This animal life stands betwixt him and thee, " Whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord," 2 Co. v. 6. Thy body must be refined and cast into a new mould else that new wine of heavenly glory would break it. Paul in his highest rapture, " when he heard things unutterable, 2 Cor 12. 4. was then but a stander by, a looker on, not admitted into the company as one of them ; but as the angels are in our assemblies, so was Paul in that glorious assembly above, and no otherwise, and yet even for this, he must, as it were, be taken out of the body, uncloathed for a little time to have a glimpse of that glory, and then put on his cloaths again. O then who would not be willing to die,

die, for a full sight and enjoyment of God? Methinks the soul should look and sigh like a prisoner through the gates of this mortality: "O that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away, and be at rest." Most men need patience to die; but a saint that understands what death admits him to, should rather need patience to live. Methinks he should often look out and listen on a death bed for his Lord's coming; and when he receives the news of his approaching change, should say, "The voice of my beloved, behold he cometh leaping over the mountains, skipping over the hills," Song ii. 8.

Arg. 3. Another argument persuading to this willingness, is the immediate succession of a more excellent and glorious life.

It is but a wink, and you shall see God. Your happiness shall not be deferred till the resurrection; "as soon as the body is dead, the gracious soul is swallowed up in life," Rom. viii. 10, 11. When once you have loosed from this shore, in a few moments, your souls will be  
wasted

wafted over upon the wings of angels to the other shore of a glorious eternity. "I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ," Phil. i. 23. Did the soul and body die together, as Berillus taught, or did they sleep till the resurrection, as others have groundlessly fancied, it had been a madness for Paul to desire a dissolution for the enjoyment of Christ; or if this were so, he enjoyed more of Christ whilst his soul dwelt in his fleshly tabernacle, than he should out of it.

There are but two ways of the soul's living, known in scripture, viz. The life of faith, and the life of vision, 1 Cor. 4. 5. Those two divide all time, both present and future, betwixt them, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. When faith fails, sight should not immediately succeed, what should become of the unbodied soul: But blessed be God, this great heart establishing truth, is evidently revealed in scripture, Luke xxiii. 43. You have Christ's promise, "I will come and receive you to myself," John xiv. 13. O what a change will a few moments make upon

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upon your condition! Rouse up, dying saint, when thy soul is come out a little farther, when it shall stand like Abraham in its tent door, the angels of God shall soon be with it. The souls of the elect are as it were put out to the angels, to nurse, and when they die, these angels carry them home again to their Father's house: If an angel were caused to fly swiftly to bring a saint the answer of his prayer, Dan. ix. 21. How much more will the angels come post from heaven to receive and transfer the praying soul itself?

Arg. 4. Farther, It may much conduce to thy willingness to die, to consider; that by death God oftentimes hides his people out of the way of all temptations and troubles upon earth. "Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." Rev. xiv. 13. It is God's usual way, when some extraordinary calamities are coming upon the world, to set his people out of harm's way beforehand. "Merciful men are taken away from the evil to come," Isa. lvii. 1. See Micah vii. 1, 2. When such an evil time

come



comes as it is there described,  
“ That they all lye in wait for blood  
and every man hunts his brother  
with a net :” Before that, God by  
an act of favour houses his people  
beforehand. Dost thou know what  
evil may be in the earth, which  
thou art so loath to leave? Thy  
God removes thee for thy great ad-  
vantage, thou art disbanded by  
death, and called off the field; o-  
ther poor saints must stand to it,  
and endure a great fight of afflicti-  
ons.

It is observed Methusela died the  
very year before the flood, August-  
in a little before the sacking of Hip-  
po, Patæus just before the taking  
of Heideburg: Luther observes  
that all the apostles died before the  
destruction of Jerusalem: And Lu-  
ther himself before the wars broke  
God out in Germany: It may be the  
Lord sees thy tender heart cannot  
endure to see the misery, or bear  
the temptations that are coming,  
and therefore will now gather thee to  
thy grave in peace, and yet wilt  
thou cry, O spare me a little lon-  
ger.

K

Arg.

Arg 5. If yet thy heart hang back, consider the great advantages you will have by death, above all that ever you enjoyed on earth. And that 1. As to your communion with God. 2. As to your communion with Saints.

1. For your communion with God, the time of perfecting that is now come, thy soul shall shortly stand before the face of God, and have the immediate emanations and beamings forth of his glory upon it, here thy soul is remote from God, the beams of his glory strike it but obliquely and feebly, but shortly will be under the line; and there the sun shall stand still as it did in Gibeon, there shall be no cloudings nor declinings of it. O how should this wrap thy soul with desires of being unclothed.

2. As for the enjoyments of saints here indeed we have fellowship with them of the lower form; but that fellowship is so dissweetened by remaining corruptions, that there is no satisfaction in it; as it is the greatest plague that can befall an hypocrite to live in a pure church

so 'tis the greatest vexation to the spirit of a saint to live in a corrupt and disordered church : But when death hath admitted you into that glorious assembly of the spirits of just men made perfect, you shall have the desire of your hearts ; here you cannot fully close one with another, yea, you cannot fully close with your own souls ; O what discords, jarrings, censurings, are here ? What perfect blessed harmony there ? In heaven each saint loves another as himself, they are altogether lovely. O my soul haste thee away from the lions dens, from the mountains of Bether ; from divided saints, to those mountains of myrrh, and hill of frankincense ; thou art now going to thine own people, as the Apostles phrase imports, 2 Cor. v. 8.

Arg. 6 If all this will not do, Consider what heavy burdens death will ease thy shoulders of.

In this tabernacle we groan, being burdened. 1. With bodily distemper. How true do we find that of Theophrastus, The soul pays a dear rent for the tenement it now

lives in ; but glorified bodies are clogged with no indispositions ; death is the best physician, it will cure thee of all diseases at once.

2. With the indwelling of sin ; this makes us groan from the very bowels, Rom. vii. 24. " But he that is dead is free from sin," Rom. vii.

7 Hath justification destroyed its damning power, and sanctification its reigning power ? So glorification destroys its very being and existence.

3. We groan under temptations here, but as soon as we are out of the body, we are out of the reach of temptation ; when once thou art got into heaven, thou mayest say, Now Satan I am there where thou canst not come ; for as the damned in hell are *malo obformati* ; so fixed in sin and misery that their condition cannot be altered, so glorified saints are *bono confirmati*, so fixed in holiness and glory that they cannot be shaken.

4. Here we groan under various troubles and afflictions, but then the days of our mourning are ended. God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes :

O then ! let us haste away that we may

may be at rest

Arg. 7. If still thou linger like Lot in Sodom, then lastly, Examine all the pleas and pretences for a longer time on earth. Why art thou unwilling to die?

Object. 1. O I have many relations in the world, I know not what will become of them when I am gone.

Sol. 1. If thou art troubled about their bodies and outward condition, why should not that word satisfy "Leave thy fatherless children to me I will keep them alive, and let thy widows trust in me," Jer. xxix. 11. Luther in his last will and testament hath this expression, Lord, thou hast given me wife and children, I have nothing to leave them, but I commit them unto thee. O father of the fatherless and judge of widows, *nutri serva doce*, nourish, keep and teach them. Or art thou troubled for their souls? Thou canst not convert them if thou shouldest live, and God can make thy prayers and counsels to live and take place upon them when thou art dead.

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Object. 2. I would fain live to do God more service in the world.

Sol. 1. Well, but if he have no more service for thee to do here, why shouldest thou not say with David; If he have no delight to use me any farther, here am I, let him do what seemeth him good. In this world thou hast no more to do, but he is calling thee to an higher service and employment in heaven, and what thou wouldst do for him here, he can do that by other hands.

Object 3. I am not fully ready, I am not as a bride completely adorned for the bridegroom.

Sol. 1. Thy justification is compleat already though thy sanctification be not so, but a willingness to die would be one great proof of sanctification.

Object. 4. O but I want assurance, if I had that, I could die presently!

Sol. 1. Yea, there it sticks indeed; but then consider, that an hearty willingness to leave all the world to be freed from sin, and be with God, is the next way to that desired assurance; no carnal person

was

was ever willing to die upon this ground.

And thus I have finished those cases which so nearly concern the people of God, in the several conditions of their life, and taught them how to keep their hearts in all. I shall next apply the whole.

# USE I.

## FOR INFORMATION.

**Y**OU have heard that the keeping of the heart is the great work of a christian, in which the very soul and life of religion consists, and without which all other duties are of no value with God: hence then I shall infer to the consternation of hypocrites, and formal professors,

That the pains and labours which many persons have taken in religion, is but lost labour, and pains to no purpose, such as will never turn to account.

Many great services have been performed, many glorious works are wrought by them, which yet are utterly rejected by God, and

shall never stand upon record in order to an eternal acceptation, because they took no heed to keep their hearts with God in those duties: This is that fatal rock upon which thousands of vain professors split themselves eternally; they are curious about the externals of religion, but regardless of their hearts. O how many hours have some professors spent in hearing, prayer, reading, conferring? and yet as to the main end of religion, as good they had sat still and done nothing, for all this signifies nothing; the great work, I mean heart-work, being all the while neglected: Tell me, thou vain professor, when didst thou shed a tear for the deadness, hardness, unbelief, or earthliness of thy heart? thinkest thou, such an easy religion can save thee? If so, we may invert Christ's words, and say, Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to life, and many there be that go in thereat. Hear me thou self deluding hypocrite, thou hast put off God with heartless duties, thou hast acted in religion, as if thou hadst been blessing



*so uncomfortably.* 123

sing an idol, that could not search and discover thy heart; thou that hast offered to God but the skin of the sacrifice, not the marrow, fat, and inwards of it; how wilt thou hold up thy head before him when he shall say, O thou dissembling false hearted man? How couldst thou profess religion? With what face couldst thou so often tell me thou lovest me, when thou knewest all the while in thine own conscience, that thine heart was not with me? O! tremble to think, what a fearful judgement it is to be given over to be a heedless and careless heart, and then to have religious duties instead of a rattle to quiet and still the conscience!

2. Hence I also infer for the humiliation even of upright hearts, that unless the people of God spend more time and pains about their hearts than generally and ordinarily they do, they are never like to do God much service, or be owners of much comfort in this world.

I may say of that Christian that is remiss and negligent in keeping his heart, as Jacob said of Reuben,

K 5

“Thou

“Thou shalt not excel.” It grieves me to see how many Christians there are that go up and down dejected and complaining that live at a poor low rate, both of service and comfort, and how can they expect it should be otherwise as long as they live at such a careless rate? O how little of their time is spent in the closet, in searching, humbling, and quickening their hearts?

You say your hearts are dead, and do you wonder they are so, as long as you keep them not with the fountain of life? If your bodies had been dieted as your souls have been, they would have been dead too. Never expect better hearts till you take more pains with them: *Quæ fugit molam, fugit farinam*: He that will not have the sweat, must not expect the sweet of religion.

O Christians! I fear your zeal and strength hath run in the wrong channel. I fear most of us may take up the Church's complaint: “They have made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept,” Song i. 6. Two things have eaten up the time

and strength of the professors of this generation, and sadly diverted them from heart-work : 1. Fruitless controversies started by Satan ; I doubt not to this very purpose, 'To take us off from practical godliness, to make us puzzle our heads when we should be searching our hearts. O how little have we minded that of the Apostle ! " It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, and not with meats," *i. e.* with disputes and controversies about meats, " which have not profited them that have been occupied therein," Heb xii. 9.

O how much better is it to see men live exactly, than to hear them dispute subtilly ! These unfruitful questions, how have they tended the churches, wasted time and spirits, and called Christians off from their main business, from looking to their own vineyard ? What think you, Sirs ? had it not been better if the questions ventiled among the people of God had been such as these, How shall a man discern the special from the common operations of the spirit ? How may a soul

discern its first declinings from God? How may a backsliding Christian recover his first love? How may the heart be preserved from unreasonable thoughts in duty? How may a bosom sin be discovered and mortified? &c. Would not this have tended more to the credit of religion, and comfort of your souls? O, it is time to repent and be ashamed of this folly! When I read what Suarez a Papist said, who wrote many tomes of disputations, That he prized the time he set apart for the searching and examining his heart, in reference to God, above all the time he spent in other duties, I am ashamed to find the professors of this age yet insensible of their folly. Shall the conscience of a Suarez feel a relenting pang for strength and time so ill employed, and shall not yours? This is it your ministers long since warned you of. Your spiritual nurses were afraid of the rick is when they saw your heads only to grow and your hearts to wither. O when will God beat our swords into plough-shares! I mean our disputes and contentions into practical

practical godliness. 2. Another cause of neglecting our heart hath been earthly incumbrances. The heads and hearts of many have been filled with such a crowd and noise of wordly business, that they have sadly and sensibly declined and withered in their zeal, love, and delight in God ; in their heavenly, serious, and profitable way of conversing with man.

O how hath this wilderness entangled us ! Our discourses and conferences, nay, our very prayers and duties have a tang of it. We have had so much work without doors, that we have been able to do but little within. It was the sad complaint of holy Mr. Strong : “ O ! ” said he, “ it is sad to think how many precious opportunities I have lost ! how many sweet motions and admonitions of the Spirit I have posted over untrustingly, and made the Lord to speak in vain, in the secret illapses of his Spirit ! The Lord hath called upon me, but my wordly thoughts did still lodge in me, and there was no place within my heart for such calls of God ! ”

Surely

Surely there is a way of enjoying God even in our worldly employments. God would never have put us upon them to our loss. Enoch walked with God and begat Sons and Daughters, Gen v. 19. He walked with God, but did not retire and separate himself from the things of this life. And the angels that are employed by Christ in the things of this world, ("for the spirit of the living creatures is in the wheels,") they are finite creatures, and cannot be in a two fold *ubi* at one time : yet they lose nothing of the beatific vision all the time of their administration : "For their angels," even whilst they were employed for them, "behold the face of their Father which is in heaven," Math. xviii. 10. We need not lose our visions by our employments, if the fault were not our own. Alas, that ever Christians who stand at the door of eternity, and have more work upon their hands than this poor moment of interposing time is sufficient for, should yet be filling both their heads and hearts with trifles.

3. Hence also I infer for the awakening of all, That if the keeping of the heart be the great work of a Christian, then there are but few real Christians in the world.

Indeed, if every one that hath learned the dialect of Christianity, and can talk like a saint—if every one that hath gifts and parts, and, by the common assisting presence of the Spirit, can preach, pray, or discourse like a Christian,—in a word, if such associate themselves with the people of God, and delight in ordinances, might pass for Christians, the number then is great.

But, alas ! to what a small number will they shrink, if you judge them by this rule ! How few are there that make conscience of keeping their hearts, watching their thoughts, judging their ends, &c. ! O ! there be but few closet men among professors. It is far easier for men to be reconciled to any duties in religion than to these. The profane part of the world will not so much as touch with the outside of religious duties, much less do this. And for the hypocrite, though he

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be polite and curious about those externals, yet you can never persuade him to this inward work, this difficult work ; this work to which there is no inducement by human applause ; this work that would quickly discover what the hypocrite cares not to know ; so that by a general consent, this heart-work is left to the hands of a few secret ones ; and I tremble to think in how few hands it is.

U S E II.

FOR EXHORTATION.

**I**F the keeping of the heart be so important a business,—if such choice advantages accrue to you thereby,—if so many dear and precious interests be wrapt up in it—then let me call upon the people of God every where to fall close to this work.

O study your hearts, watch your hearts, keep your hearts ! Away with fruitless controversies and idle questions ; away with empty names and vain shews ; away with unprofitable discourse and bold censures  
of



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of others ; turn in upon yourselves, get into your closets, and now resolve to dwell there. You have been strangers to this work too long, you have kept others vineyards too long ; you have trifled about the borders of religion too long ; this world hath detained you from your great work too long. Will you now resolve to look better to your hearts ? Will you haste and come out of the crowds of business and clamours of the world, and retire yourselves more than you have done ? O that this day you would resolve upon it ?

Reader, methinks I should prevail with thee. All that I beg for is but this : That thou wouldst step aside a little oftener to talk with God and thine own heart, thou wouldst not suffer every trifle to divert thee, that thou wouldst keep a more true and faithful account of thy thoughts and affections ; that thou wouldst but seriously demand of thine own heart, at least every evening, O my heart ! where hast thou been to-day ? Whither hast thou made a road to-day ? If all that

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that hath been said by way of inducement be not enough, I have yet more motives to offer you : and the first is this :

Motive 2. The studying, observing and diligent keeping your own hearts, will marvelously help your understanding in the deep mysteries of religion.

An honest, well-experienced heart is a singular help to a weak head. Such a heart will serve you instead of a commentary upon a great part of the scriptures. By this means you shall far better understand the things of God, than the learned rabbies and profound doctors (if graceless and unexperienced) ever did. You shall not only have a more clear, but a more sweet, perception and gust of them : A man may discourse orthodoxly and profoundly of the nature and effects of faith, the troubles and comforts of conscience, the sweetness of communion with God, that never felt the efficacy and sweet impressions of these things upon his own spirit. But O how dark and dry are these notions compared with his upon whose heart

They have been acted? When such a man reads David's psalms, or Paul's epistles, there he finds his own objections made and answered. O! saith he, these holy men speak my very heart! Their doubts were mine, their troubles mine, and their experiences mine. I remember Chrysostom speaking to the people of Antioch about some choise experiences, used this expression: *Sciunt initiati quod dico*: "Those that are initiated know what I say," Experience is the best schoolmaster. O, then, study your hearts, keep your hearts!

Mot. 2 The study and observation of your own hearts will antidote you against the dangerous and infecting errors of the times and the places you live in.

For what think you is the reason that so many professors in England have departed from the faith, giving heed to fables; that so many thousands have been led away by the error of the wicked; that Jesuits and Quakers who have sown corrupt doctrine, have had such plentiful harvests among us; but because

because they have met with a company of empty notional professors that never knew what belongs to practical godliness, and the study of their own hearts?

Suppose a subtle Papist should talk of the dignity and merit of good works, could he ever work the persuasion of it into that heart that is conscious to itself of so much darkness, deadness, distraction, and unbelief attending its best duties? It is a good rule, *Non est disputandum de gustu*: "There is no disputing against taste," What a man hath felt and tasted, one cannot beat him off from that by argument.

Mot. 3. Your care and diligence in keeping your hearts will prove one of the best evidences of your sincerity.

I know no external act of religion that differences the sound from the unsound professor. It is wonderful to consider how far hypocrites go in all external duties; how plausible they can order the outward man, hiding all their indecencies from the observation of the world. But then, they take no heed to their hearts.

com- hearts ; they are not in secret, what  
ffors they appear to be in public : and  
s to before this trial no hypocrite can  
study stand. It is confess'd, they may in a  
ould fit, under a pang, upon a death  
g of ed, cry out of the wickedness of  
pers their hearts ; but alas ! there is no  
at need to be taken to these extorted  
dark complaints. In our law no credit is  
un- to be given to the testimony of one  
It upon the rack, because it may be  
m de supposed, that the extremity of the  
g a- torture may make him say any thing  
n felt to be eased, but, if self-jealousy,  
n off care, and watchfulness, be the dai-  
ence y workings and frames of thy heart,  
rove it strongly argues the sincerity of it ;  
your in what but the sense of a divine  
gion eye what but the real hatred of sin as  
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erful cret duties, which lie out of the  
go in observation of all creatures ?  
fible If then it be a desirable thing in  
man, thine eyes to have a fair testimony  
from of thine integrity, and to know of  
But a truth that thou fearest God, then  
their study thine heart, watch thy heart,  
earls keep thy heart.

Mot. 4. How fruitful, sweet,  
and comfortable would all ordinan-

ces and duties be to us if our hearts were better kept ?

O what precious communion might you have with God every time you approach him ; if your hearts were but in frame, you might then say with David, " My meditation of him shall be sweet." *Psal. civ. 34.* That which loses all our comforts in ordinances and most secret duties, is the indisposedness of the heart : a Christian whose heart is in a good frame gets the start of others that come with him in that duty ; they are tugging hard to get up their hearts with God now trying this argument upon them, and then that, to quicken and affect them, and, sometimes go away as bad as they came. Sometimes the duty is almost ended before their hearts begin to stir to feel any warmth, quickening, or power from it : but all this while the prepared heart is at its work ; this is he that ordinarily gets the first sight of Christ in a sermon ; the first kiss from Christ in secret prayer. I tell you, and I tell you but what I have felt, that prayers and ser-

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mons would appear to you other manner of things than they do ; did you but bring better ordered hearts unto them, you would not go away so dejected and drooping. O this hath been a lost day, a lost duty to me, if you had not lost your hearts it might not be so. If then the comfort of ordinances be sweet, look to your hearts, keep your hearts.

Mot. 5 Acquaintance with your own hearts would be a fountain of matter to you in prayer.

A man that is diligent in heart work, and knows the state of his own soul, will have a fountain-fulness of matter to supply him richly in all his addresses to God : his tongue shall not falter, and make pauses for want of matter, " My heart is inditing good matter," Psal. xlv. 14. Or as Montanus renders the original, " My heart is bubbling up good matter, like a living spring that is constantly bubbling up fresh water, and then my tongue is as the pen of a ready writer." Others must pump their memories, rack their inventions, and are often at a loss when they have done all ;  
but,

but, if thou have kept and faithfully kept thy own heart, it will be with thee (as Job speaks in another case,) like bottles full of new wine, that want vent, which are ready to burst. As holy matter flows plentifully, so more feelingly and sweetly from such a heart, when a heart experienced Christian is m<sup>o</sup>urning before God for some special heart-corruption, wrestling with God for the supply of some special inward want, he speaks not as other men do, that have learned to pray by rote, their confessions and p<sup>o</sup>rtions are squeezed out, his drop freely like pure honey from the comb, it is a happiness then to be with or near such a Christian. I remember Bernard having given rules to prepare the heart for prayer, concluded them thus: *Et cum talis fueris memento mei* "When thy heart is in this frame then remember me."

Mot. 6. By this the decayed power of religion will be recovered again among professors, which is the most desirable sight in this world.

O that I might live to see that day, when professors shall not walk



in a vain shew, when they shall please themselves no more with a name to live, being spiritually dead, when they shall be no more (as many of them now are) a company of frothy, vain and usurious persons, but the majestic beams of holiness shining from their heavenly and serious conversation shall awe the world, and command reverence from all that are about them; when they shall warm the hearts of those that come nigh them, so that men shall say, God is in these men of a truth.

Well, such a time may again be expected according to that promise: "The people shall be all righteous," Isa. lx. 21. But till we fall closer to this great work of keeping our hearts, I am out of hopes to see those blessed days. I cannot expect better times till God give better hearts. Doth it not grieve you to see what a scorn religion is made in the world? what objects of contempt and scorn the professors of it are made in the world?

Professors, would you recover your credit? would you again obtain

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242. *Scandals hereby prevented.*

tain an honourable testimony in the consciences of your very enemies? Then, keep your hearts, watch your hearts. It is the looseness, frothiness, and earthliness of your hearts that hath made your lives so; and this hath brought you under contempt of the world. You first lose your sight of God and communion with him, then your heavenly and serious deportment among men, and by that your interest in their consciences. O! then, for the credit of religion, for the honour of your profession, keep your hearts.

Mot. 7. By diligence in keeping our hearts, we should prevent and remove the fatal scandals and stumbling blocks out of the world.

“Woe to the world,” saith Christ, “because of offences,” Matth. xviii. 7. Doth not shame cover your faces? Do not your hearts bleed within you to hear of the scandalous miscarriages of many loose professors? Could you not, like Shem and Japheth, go backwards with a garment to cover the shame of many professors? How is that worthy name blasphamed! Jam. ii. 7.

Sam.

Sam. xii. 13, 14. the hearts of the  
righteous saddened, Psal. xxv. 3.  
Ezek. xxxvi. 20. By this the world  
is fearfully prejudiced against Christ  
and religion, the bonds of death  
made fast upon their souls, those  
that had a general love and liking  
to the ways of God, startled and  
driven back, and thus soul-blood is  
shed. Wo to the world!

Yea, how are the consciences of  
fallen professors plunged and even  
overwhelmed in the deeps of trou-  
ble, God inwardly excommunicat-  
ing their souls from all comfortable  
fellowship with himself, and the joys  
of his salvation? Infinite are the  
mischiefs that come by the scanda-  
lous lives of professors.

And what is the true cause and  
reason of all this, but the neglecting  
of their hearts? Were our hearts  
better kept, all this would be pre-  
vented. Had David kept his heart,  
he had not broken his bones. A  
neglecting careless heart, must of  
necessity produce a disorderly scan-  
dalous life. I thank God for the  
freedom and faithfulness of a rever-  
end brother, in shewing professors

244 *Service of God promoted*

their manifold miscarriages \*, and from my heart do wish, that when their wounds have been thoroughly searched by that probe, God would be pleased to hail them by this plaiſter. O professors ! if ever you would keep religion ſweet, if ever you hope to recover the credit of it in the world, keep your hearts. Either keep your hearts or loſe your credit, keep your hearts or loſe your comforts ; keep your hearts leſt ye ſhed ſoul-blood. What words can expreſs the deep concernments, the wonderful conſequences of this work ? Every thing puts a neceſſity, a ſolemnity, a beauty upon it.

Motive 8. An heart well kept will fit you for any condition God caſts you into, or any ſervice he hath to uſe you in.

He that hath learned how to keep his heart lowly, is fit for proſperity, and he that knows how to uſe and apply to it ſcripture-promiſes and ſupports, is fit to paſs through any adverſity ; he that can deny the pride and ſelfiſhneſs of his heart, is fit to be employed in any ſervice for God. Such a man was Paul.

\* *Gospel Glaſs.*

and He did not only spend his time in  
hen preaching to others, in keeping o-  
ghly thers vineyards, but he looked to  
ould himself, kept his own vineyard ;  
laif- " Lett when I have preached to o-  
ould thers, I myself should be a cast a-  
hope way," 1 Cor. ix. 27. And what  
the an eminent instrument was he for  
ther God ? He could turn his hand to  
edit any work ; he could dexterously  
om manage both an adverse and prof-  
shed perous condition : " I know how  
ex to abound, and how to suffer want."  
the Let the people defy him, it moves  
ork him not, unless to indignation ; let  
lem them stone him, he can bear it :  
will " If a man purge himself from these  
cast faith he, he shall be a vessel unto  
h to honour, sanctified and meet for the  
master's use, and prepared unto e-  
very good work," 2 Tim. ii. 21.

keep First the heart must be purged,  
rity and then it is prepared for the ser-  
and vice of God. When The heart of  
and Isaiah was purified, which was the  
any thing signified by the touching of  
the his lips with a coal from the altar,  
t, when he was fit for God's work :  
service " Here am I, send me," Isa. vi.  
auls 7, 8. Put a man that hath not  
He L 3 learned

246 *Communion of Saints sweetened*

learned to keep his heart, upon any service for God, and, if it be attended with honour, it shall swell up and over top his spirit; if with suffering, it will exanimate and sink him.

Jesus Christ had an instrumental fitness for his Father's work above all the servants that ever God employed. He was zealous in public work for God: so zealous, that sometimes he forgot to eat bread; yea, that his friends thought he had been beside himself; but he so carried on his public work, as not to forget his own private communion with God. And therefore you read in Matth. xiv. 23. that when he had been labouring all day, yet after that he went up to a mountain to pray, and was there alone. O let the keepers of the vineyards look to their own vineyards! We shall never be so instrumental to the good of others, as when we are most diligent about our own souls.

Motive 9. If the people of God would more diligently keep their hearts, how exceedingly would the communion of saints be thereby sweetened. “How

“How goodly then would be thy tents, O Jacob ! and thy tabernacles O Israel ! ” Then as it is prophesied of the Jews : “ Men would say, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is among you,” Zech. viii. 23.

It is the fellowship your souls have with the Father and with the Son that draws out the desires of others after fellowship with you, 1 John i. 3. I tell you, if saints would be persuaded to take more pains, and spend more time about their hearts, there would quickly be such a divine lustre upon the face of their conversation, that men would account it no small privilege to be with or near them.

It is the pride, passion, and earthliness of our hearts that hath spoiled Christian fellowship. Whence is it that when Christians meet, they are often jarring and contending, but only from their unmortified passions ? Whence are there uncharitable censures of their brethren, but only from self-ignorance ? Why are they so rigid and unmerciful towards those that are fallen,

248 *Communion of Saints. sweetened*  
but because they consider not themselves as the Apostle speaks, Gal. vi. 1. ? Why is their discourse so frothy and unprofitable when they meet ? is not this from the earthliness and vanity of their hearts ?

My brethren, these be the things that have spoiled Christian fellowship, and made it become a dry and sapless thing ; so that many Christians are even weary of it, and are ready to say with the Prophet, " O that I had a Cottage in the wilderness, &c. that I might leave my people and go from them ! " Jer. ix. 2. And with David : " My soul hath long dwelt with them that hate peace," Psal. cxx. 6.

But now, if professors would study their own hearts more, watch and keep them better, all this would be prevented, and the beauty and glory of communion again restored. They would divide no more ; contend no more ; censure rashly no more. When their hearts are in tune, their tongues will not jar. How charitable, pitiful, and tender will they be one of another, when every one is daily humbled under the

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the evil of his own heart ! Lord hasten those much desired days, and bless these counsels in order to them.

Mot. 10. Lastly, By this the comforts of the spirit, and precious influences of all ordinances would be fixed, and much longer preserved in your souls than they now are.

Ah ! what would I give that my soul might be preserved in that frame I sometimes find it after an ordinance ! *Aliquando intromittis me, Domine, in affectum multum inusitatum introrsus, adquam nescio dulcedinem, &c.* said one of the fathers sweetly : “ Sometimes, O Lord, thou admittest me into the most inward, unusual, and sweet delights, to I know not what sweetness, which, were it perfected in me, I know not what it would be ; or, rather, what it would not be. But, alas ! the heart grows careless again, and quickly returns, like water removed from the fire to its native coldness.” Could you but keep those things for ever in your hearts, what manner of Christians would you be ! what lives would you live ! And how is it that these things remain no longer

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250 *Influences of Ordinances*

with us ? Doubtless it is because we suffer our hearts to take cold again. We should be as careful after an ordinance or duty to prevent this, as one that comes out of a hot bath, or great sweat, is of going out into the chill air.

It is a thousand pities that the ordinances of God, as to their quickening and comforting effects, should be like those human ordinances the apostle speaks, that perish in the using. 'O then let me say to you as Job, chap. xv. 11. Do the consolations of God seem small to you ?' Look over these ten special benefits, weigh them in a just balance : Are they small matters ? 1. Is it a small matter to have thy weak understanding assisted ? 2. Thine endangered soul antidoted ? 3. Thy sincerity cleared ? 4. Thy communion with God sweetened ? 5. Thy sails filled in prayer ? 6. Is it a small thing to have the decayed power of godliness again recovered ? 7. All fatal scandal removed ? 8. An instrumental fitness to serve Christ obtained ? 9. The communion of Saints restored to its primitive glory ? and, 10. The

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The influences of ordinances abiding in the souls of saints? If these be no common blessings, no small benefits, then surely it is a great duty to keep the heart with all diligence.

### USE III.

#### FOR DIRECTION.

**T**HE next Use shall be for Direction to some special means for the keeping of the heart. And there, besides what hath been hinted in the explication of the duty already, to which I refer the reader, and all those directions throughout the whole, appropriated to particular cases and seasons, I shall further add several other general means of excellent use to this end: and the first is this:

Means 1. Would you thus keep your hearts as hath been persuaded? Then furnish your hearts richly with the word of God, which is their best preservative against sin.

Keep the word, and the word will keep you. As the first receiving of the word regenerated your hearts, so the keeping of the word

within you, will preserve your hearts: "Let the word of Christ dwell richly in you," Col. iii. 16. Let it dwell, not tarry with you for a night; and let it dwell richly or plentifully, in all that is of it, in its commands, promises, threats; in all that is in you, in your understandings, memories, consciences, affections, and then it will preserve your hearts; "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psal. cxix. 11. It is the slipperiness of our hearts, in reference to the word, that causes so many slips in our lives. Conscience cannot be urged, or awed, with forgotten truth: but keep it in the heart and it will keep both heart and life upright: "The law of his God is in his heart, none of his steps shall slide," Psal. xvii. 31. Or if he do, the word will recover the straying heart again: "Then Peter remembered the word of Jesus and wept bitterly." Mat. 26. 57. We never lose our hearts till they have first lost the efficacious and powerful impressions of the word.

**Means 2.** Call your hearts frequently

quently to an account, if ever you mean to keep them with God.

Those that put a stock into the hands of unfaithful and suspicious servants, will be sure to make short reckonings with them : " The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," Jer. xvii. 9. O ! 'tis as necessary as sweet, that we and our reins : *i. e.* we and our secret thoughts, confer together every night, Psal. xvi. 7. We should call our hearts to account every evening, and say, O my heart were hast thou been to day ? where have thy thoughts wandered to day ? what account canst thou give of them ? O naughty heart, vain heart ! couldst thou not abide by the fountain of delights ? Is there better entertainment with the creature than with God ? The oftener the heart meets with rebukes and checks for wandering, the less it will wander. If every vain thought were retracted with a sigh, every excursion of the heart from God with a severe check, it would not dare so boldly and frequently to digress and step aside. Those actions which

which are committed with reluctance are not committed with frequency.

Means 3. He that will keep his heart, must take heed of plunging himself into such a multiplicity of earthly business, as he cannot manage without neglecting his main business.

It cannot be imagined he should keep his heart with God, that hath lost himself in a wood of earthly business. Take heed you do not pinch your souls by gratifying the immoderate desires of your flesh. I wish many Christians could truly say what Seneca, a Heathen once did: "I do not give but only lend myself to my business." It is Germanicus reigned in the Romans hearts; Tiberius only in their provinces. Though the world be in your hands, let it not juggle Christ out of your hearts.

Take heed, Christian, lest thy shop steal away thy heart from thy closet. God never intended earthly employment for a stop, but rather for a step, to heavenly ones.

If thy ship be over-laden, thou must

must cast some over-board. More business than thou canst well manage, is like more meat than thou canst well digest, which will quickly make a sickly soul.

Means 4. He that means to keep his heart, must carefully observe its first declinings from God, and stop it there.

He that will find his house in good repair, must stop every chink as soon as discovered ; and he that will keep his heart, must not let a vain thought be long neglected. The Serpent of heart-apostacy is best killed in the egg of a small remission. O, if many poor decayed Christians had looked to their hearts in time, they had never come to that sad pass they now are ! We may say of heart-neglects, as the Apostle doth of vain babblings, That they “ increase to more and more ungodliness : ” *Nemo repente fit turpissimus*. Little sins neglected will quickly become great and masterless. The greatest Crocodile once lay in an egg ; the greatest oak was once but an acorn ; the firing of a small train of powder may

may blow up all by leading to a greater quantity. Men little think what a proud, vain, wanton, or worldly thought may grow to. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles!

**Means 5.** Take heed of losing the liveliness and sweetness of your communion with God, lest thereby your hearts be loosed from God.

The heart is an hungry and restless thing; it will have something to feed upon: if it enjoy nothing from God, it will hunt for something among the creatures, and there it often loses itself, as well as its end. There is nothing more engages the heart to a constancy, and evenness in walking with God, than the sweetness it tastes therein. As the Gauls when once they had tasted the sweet wine of Italy, could never be satisfied till they conquered the country where it grew.

**Means 6.** Habituate thy heart to spiritual meditations, if thou wouldst have it freed from base burdensome diversions.

By this means you will get a facility;



lity ; and dexterity in heart-work ; it is pity those smaller portions of our time betwixt solemn duties should lie upon our hands and be rendered useless to us. O learn to save, and be good husbands upon your thoughts ! To this purpose, a neat author speaks : " These parentheses which happen to come between the solemn passages (whether business or recreations) of human life, are wont to be lost by men, for want of a due reverence for them ; and even by good men, for want of skill to preserve them : for though they do not properly despise them, yet they neglect or lose them, for want of knowing how to rescue them, or what to do with them. " But tho' grains of sand and ashes be a part, but of a despicable smallness, and liable to be scattered and blown away, yet the skilful artificer, by a vehement fire, brings numbers of these to afford him that noble substance glass, by whose help we may both see ourselves and our blemishes lively represented, as in looking-glasses ; and discern the celestial objects, as with telescopes, and

and, with the sun-beams, kindle disposed materials, as with burning glasses: So when these little fragments or parcels of time, which, if not carefully looked to, would be dissipated and lost, come to be managed by a skilful contemplator, and to be improved by the celestial fire of devotion, they may be so ordered, as to afford us both looking glasses to dress our souls by, and prospectives to discover heavenly wonders and incentives to inflame our hearts with zeal." Thus far he.

Something of that nature I have under hand for a public benefit, if God give life to finish, and opportunity to produce it. Certainly this is a great advantage for the keeping of the heart with God.

#### U S E IV.

##### FOR CONSOLATION.

**I** Shall now close the whole with a word or two of consolation to all diligent and serious Christians, that faithfully and closely ply heart-work; that are groaning and weep-

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ing in secret over the hardness, pride earthliness, and vanity of their hearts ; that are fearing and trembling over the experienced deceitfulness and falseness of them, whilst other vain professors eyes are abroad, their time and strength eaten up by fruitless disputes, and earthly employments ; or, at best, by cold and formal performances of some heartless and empty duties. Poor Christian, I have three things to offer thee in order to thy support and comfort, and doubtless either of them mixed with faith, is sufficient to comfort thee over all the trouble thou hast with thine own heart.

Comfort. 1. This argues thy heart to be upright and honest, whatever thy other gifts and abilities are.

It is uprightness of heart will comfort thee upon a death-bed : “ Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the Lord, saying, Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart,” &c. 2 Kings xx. 23.

I am really of his mind who said, *Si mihi daretur obtio, eligerim Christiani*

260 *Refreshing Cordials, &c.*

*tiani rustici sordidissimum et maxime  
agreste opus, præ omnibus victoriis  
et triumphis Alexandri aut Cæsaris.*

“ Might I have my wish, I would prefer the most despicable and sordid work of a rustic Christian, before all the victories of Alexander or Cæsar”. Yea, let me add, before all the elaborate duties and excellent gifts of vain professors, before the tongues of men and angels. It will signify more to my comfort to spend one single hour in mourning before the Lord, over heart-corruption, than many hours in a seeming zealous, but really dead, performance of common duties, with the greatest enlargements, and richest embellishments of parts and gifts.

By this very thing Christ distinguishes the formal and serious Christian, Matth. vi. 5. The one is for the street and synagogue, for the observation and applause of men; but the other is a closet-man: he drives on a home trade—a heart-trade. Never be troubled, then, for the want of those things that a man may have and be eternally damned, but rather bless God for that

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that which none but the favourites and darlings of Heaven have. Many a one is now in hell that had a better head than thine, and many a one now in heaven that complained of as bad a heart as thine.

**Com. 2.** Know farther for thy comfort, That God would never leave thee under so many heart-troubles and burdens, if he intended not thy real benefit thereby.

Thou art often crying out, Lord, why is it thus? Why go I mourning all the day, having sorrow at my heart? Thus long I have been exercised with hardness of heart, and to this day have not obtained a broken heart. Many years have I been praying and striving against vain thoughts, yet I am still infested and perplexed with them. O! when shall I get a better heart? I have been in travail, and brouht forth but wind: I have obtained no deliverance, neither have the corruptions of my heart fallen. I have brought this heart many times to prayers, sermons, sacraments, expecting and hoping for a cure to them, and still my sore runneth and ceaseth not.

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Pensive soul ! let this comfort you : Thy God designs thy benefit, even by these occasions of thy sad complaints : for, 1. Hereby he would let thee see what thy heart by nature is and was ; and therein take notice how much thou art beholden to free grace. He leaves thee under these excercises of spirit, that thou mayest lie with thy face upon the ground, admiring that ever the Lord of glory should take such a toad so vile a creature, into his bosom. Thy base heart, if it be good for nothing else, yet serves to commend and set off the unsearchable riches of free-grace. 2. This serves to beat thee off continually from resting, yea, or but glancing, upon thine own righteousness or excellency. The corruption of thy heart, working in all thy duties, makes thee sensible to feel that the bed is too short, and the covering too narrow. Were it not for those reflections thou hast after duties, upon the dulness and distractions of thine own heart in them, how apt wouldst thou be to fall in love with, and admire thine own performances and  
enlarge-

enlargements? For if, notwithstanding these, thou hast much to do with the pride of thy heart, how much more, if such humbling and self-abasing considerations were wanting. And lastly, this tends to make thee the more compassionate and tender towards others. Perhaps thou wouldst have little pity for the distresses and soul troubles of others, if thou hadst less experience of thine own.

Com. 3. To conclude, God will shortly put a blessed end to all these troubles, cares, and watchings.

The time is coming when thy heart shall be as thou wouldst have it; when thou shalt be discharged of all these cares, fears, and sorrows and never cry out, Oh my hard, my proud, my vain, my earthly heart, any more; when all darkness shall be banished from thine understanding, and thou shalt clearly discover all truths in God, that crystal ocean of truth; when all vanity shall be purged perfectly out of thy thoughts, and they be everlastingly, ravishingly, and delightfully entertained and exercised upon that

264     *for upright Hearts.*

that supreme goodness and infinite excellency of God, from whom they shall never start any more like a broken bow. And as for thy pride, passion, earthliness, and all other the matters of thy complaint and trouble, it shall be said of them, as of the Egyptians to Israel: "Stand still and see the Salvation of God." These corruptions thou seest to-day, henceforth thou shalt see them no more for ever; when thou shalt lay down thy weapons of prayers, tears, and groans, and put on the armour of light, not to fight, but to triumph in.

Lord, when shall this blessed day come? How long? how long, holy and true? My soul waiteth for thee. Come my Beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. Amen.



**F I N I S.**



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